

Questions to ask any joint replacement surgeon.

Including this one. Bring this list to every consultation — the answers matter more than the brochure.

THE ONE-MINUTE VERSION

If you only read one page, read this.

- Useful questions are the ones whose answers differ between surgeons — ask them everywhere, including here.
- Experience: is joint replacement the core of the practice? Fellowship-trained? Does the surgeon do revisions?
- The plan: why this implant, this approach, this alignment — for you specifically?
- Aftercare: who answers the phone at 8 pm Saturday, and how is recovery followed between visits?
- A confident surgeon is never offended by a second opinion.

DR. SEEM'S PERSPECTIVE

Nothing on this list offends me — I would want the same answers if it were my parent in the chair. Interview your surgeon. The good ones enjoy it.

— Why we published this

Any practice can tell you it delivers excellent care. Useful questions are the ones whose answers actually differ between surgeons — and you're entitled to ask all of them. Dr. Seem answers these for his own practice below, but the list is designed to travel: take it to any consultation, including a second opinion.

— About experience and focus

- 01 **Is joint replacement the core of your practice, or one of many things you do?** Focused practice matters — in surgery, repetition builds judgment.
- 02 **Are you fellowship-trained in adult reconstruction?** That's a full extra year devoted specifically to hip and knee replacement, including the difficult ones.
- 03 **Do you perform revisions?** A surgeon who repairs failed replacements has seen exactly how primaries fail — knowledge that flows backward into doing the first operation well.
- 04 **Who actually performs my operation?** Ask who makes the cuts, and who is in the room from incision to closure.

— About the plan for *you*

- 01 **Why this implant, for me?** There should be a reason connected to your anatomy and your life — not just “it's what we use.”
- 02 **Why this approach (anterior, posterior, robotic, navigated)?** Every approach has trade-offs; what you want to hear is why this one fits your case.
- 03 **What alignment philosophy do you use for knees, and why?** A surgeon should be able to explain, in plain words, how they decide what “straight” means for your leg.
- 04 **What are *my* specific risks?** Your health, weight, bone quality, and history shift the odds. Generic risk lists are the start of the answer, not the end.

— About what happens after

- 01 **Will I go home the same day? What decides that?**
- 02 **Who do I call at 8 pm on a Saturday if something worries me?** The answer tells you a lot about how a practice thinks about recovery.
- 03 **How do you follow my recovery between visits?** This is where connected tools — apps, and in select knees a smart implant — either exist or don't.
- 04 **When do you see me again, and what would make you want to see me sooner?**

— Questions that sound tough — and are completely fair

- “What’s your infection rate, and what do you do to keep it low?”
- “When was the last time a patient of yours needed a reoperation, and why?” Every busy surgeon has honest answers here; what you’re listening for is candor.
- “If my case turned out to be harder than expected, what would you do differently?”
- “Would you send your own parent to the facility where I’ll have surgery?”

A NOTE ON SECOND OPINIONS

A confident surgeon is never offended by one. If a recommendation is sound, a second look will agree with it; if it isn’t, you’ll be glad you asked. Dr. Seem provides second opinions for primary and complex cases — and encourages his own patients to seek them whenever it would bring peace of mind.

RELATED GUIDES IN THIS LIBRARY

- Do I actually need a replacement yet?
- What “robotic surgery” actually means
- Why joint replacements fail

— What happens next

If you decide to be seen, the consultation starts with listening — your story, your goals, and what the joint is taking from you. Then an examination, and a review of your imaging together on the screen, so you can see what we see. You’ll leave with an honest recommendation and every reasonable option explained — including the option of waiting. Nothing is decided without you.

To schedule: call (540) 667-8975 — Winchester Orthopaedic Associates, 128 Medical Circle, Winchester, VA 22601.



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