

## WAITING FOR CONSULTATION

### 1. Why is the wait time so long?

There are many patients who require specialty care and many who need surgery. We have limited resources to support a growing demand of patients and we are doing our best.

Both waiting times for consult and for surgery have been increasing over the last several years. *(Why? Likely Baby Boomers and an increase in average BMI).* **The demand for joint replacement surgery increases at about three percent per year.** This means approximately 600 more people were added to consult waitlists across Alberta this year compared to last year. This trend is seen year-over-year. **There has been zero increase in the number of joints performed for the past four years.**

### 2. I received an acceptance letter saying my wait time is 'x' months and it's been past the wait time, when can I get an appointment?

The Clinic works hard to provide accurate wait time estimates. There are a lot of moving parts and thousands of referrals – so it can be difficult to estimate.

There are a variety of factors that can affect future wait times. The wait time estimate provided are based on current clinic, surgeon and operating room time and current referral volumes. The wait times provided are approximate and can fluctuate.

You are indeed on the waitlist (confirm) and will be called as soon as an appointment is available.

### 3. Is there any way to shorten my wait for consultation?

If your pain is worse or function has declined, please have your family physician send us an updated letter indicating the changes you have experienced.

Generally, those referred to the next available surgeon will be seen in the shortest amount of time. If you are referred directly to a surgeon and have no preference for which surgeon you see, please notify our office you wish to change to the next available surgeon list.

[If the patient is an H&K patient and will not see a surgeon for several months, you can offer them a chance to see an MSK Screener. Please ensure you explain in detail what MSK Screening is (see below). ]

### 4. What is MSK Screening?

The Clinic has two retired orthopedic surgeons who are able to see patients and give them some direction. This is an additional visit. If the MSK Screener believes you are not a surgical candidate, they will set you up with a non-surgical treatment plan. If the MSK Screener indicates you are a surgical candidate, you will go right back on the surgeon's waitlist where you left off – this visit will not increase your wait time to see the operative surgeon. This does NOT mean that you will be having surgery - it will be the surgeon who will decide if you are truly a surgical candidate. Then it is up to YOU to decide if you want to have surgery.

# WAITING TIME FAQ



## 5. How long will I have to wait to see a surgeon after I see a screener?

This visit did not increase your waiting time for the surgeon. Your spot on the waitlist has not been affected by this visit. You will hear from us to book your consult with the surgeon when an appointment is available. If you are deemed surgical at that time, you will be placed on that surgeon's surgical waitlist as of the date the decision was made and surgical consent signed. The length of each surgeon's surgical waitlist varies; the wait may be anywhere from 3 to 12 months.

## 6. Why did my friend/sister/etc. see someone in less time than me?

All patients wait in order from the date their referral was received. We have strict waitlist policies in place to ensure all patients are treated equally and fairly. We have thousands of patients waiting for consultation and we work very hard to ensure waitlists are managed fairly.

Each clinic has a different number of surgeons who operate on hips and knees, some surgeons only focus on different bones or joints such as spines. Generally, those referred to the next available surgeon will be seen in the shortest amount of time. If you are referred directly to a surgeon and have no preference for which surgeon you see, please notify our office you wish to change to the next available surgeon list.

There are situations where a patient is more clinically urgent, has seen the surgeon in the past (second joint, non-surgical extra), was available on short notice for cancellation or waiting for a different surgeon with a slightly different waitlist. You can always note in the booking card that the patient is available on short notice.

We can never discuss other patient's information. If a patient chooses to share a friend's name who had a shorter wait time – we can accept this information and look into it, but we can never disclose that other patient's information. You can speak only general terms.

## 7. Is there a cancellation list for consultation?

All patients referred to us are kept on a single waitlist. If there is a cancellation, we simply go down the list and call the next patient until the appointment is filled. The waitlist is ordered by the date we received your referral. We can make note that you are available on short notice on the file (make note in booking card). The urgency of your condition, as detailed by your family doctor, is considered.

## 8. What can I do while I am waiting to see the surgeon?

You can start preparing early for your potential surgery. Using the time you must wait to see the surgeon and/or for surgery to optimize your health will make your experience here at the clinic smoother and timelier.

- Remain as active as you can; the more physically fit you are, the easier it will be to recover after surgery.
- Attend one of our Healthy Living classes about healthy eating and activity. This class will review the best ways to stay healthy or become healthier before surgery. You may need to lose weight before the surgeon will consider operating on you. Now is a good time to start your weight loss program.

# WAITING TIME FAQ



Manage your other health concerns. If you have untreated Obstructive Sleep Apnea or High Blood Pressure, have a high HgbA1C, or are overweight you may experience delays until your health issue is treated. See your General Practitioner (GP) regarding these concerns.

## 9. What do I do about the pain in my hip or knee?

- Be as active as you can.
- Work with your GP, who knows you best, to determine which ant-inflammatory/pain medications will work best for you.

## WAITING FOR SURGERY

### 1. Why are the wait times so long?

There are many steps you need to take to prepare for surgery. Use the time you are waiting to optimize your health, review your surgical and post-surgical plans/exercises and start practicing and prepare your home.

There is a set amount of operating room time available each year. This is spread across all the hospital sites and all the surgeons. There are many patients who require specialty care and many who need surgery. We have limited resources to support a growing demand of patients and we are doing our best.

Both waiting times for consult and for surgery have been increasing over the last several years. **The demand for joint replacement surgery increases at about three percent per year.** This means approximately 300 more people were added to surgical waitlists across Alberta this year compared to last year. This trend is seen year-over-year. **There has been zero increase in the number of joints performed for the past four years.**

### 2. How long after my initial appointment will I have to wait for surgery?

This is variable depending on surgeon. Your case manager will discuss your surgeons current wait time with you once you are booked for surgery. Wait times vary by surgeon between 3 months and over 12 months.

The time you wait is also dependent on your physical readiness for surgery. We will work closely with you to ensure you fully prepared for surgery. There are many steps between your consultation with the surgeon and your surgery to ensure you are prepared for surgery and often this requires many months.