

**MIKE FOSTER**  
**Hand Wrist and Elbow Surgeon**  
**Elbow Joint Replacement**

**Problem**

- Arthritis has developed between the bones of the elbow.
- Pain and stiffness.

**Cause**

- Often due to inflammatory arthritis, but can be secondary to trauma or an osteoarthritic process.

**Diagnosis**

- X-rays confirm the diagnosis.
- CT scan can be used to delineate the degree of arthritis and joint deformity.

**Treatment**

- Operation - General anaesthetic, arm block
  - One to two night hospital stay.
  - Large posterior incision
  - The ulnar nerve identified and protected.
  - Muscles elevated off the back of the humerus and ulna.
  - Joint cuts made.
  - Sloppy hinged prosthesis cemented in place.
  - Soft tissues repaired back onto the bone and wounds closed.

**Potential Complications**

- Infection, haematoma, and stiffness, neurovascular injury.
- Loosening of the prosthesis.
- Late infection.

**Post Op Care**

- Minimum of 1-2 nights in hospital.
- Splint for the first five days until the wound has satisfactorily healed and commence active mobilisation.
- Lifting restriction of two kilograms.
- Long term yearly x-ray review to check for loosening.