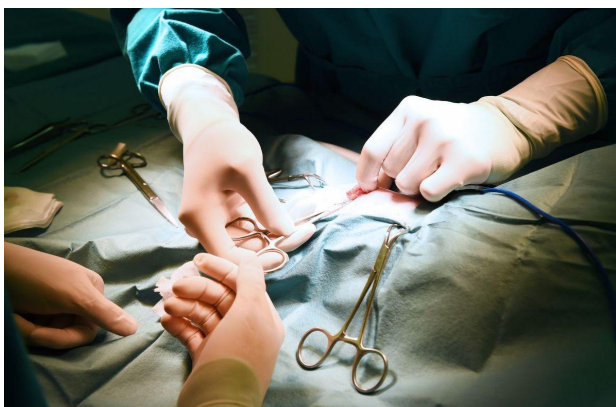


Educational Takeaways - Surgery with an AiArthritis Disease

Educational resource based on AiArthritis Voices 360 Episode 89 with co-hosts Leila Lagandaon, Kerry Wong, and Deb Constien

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Co-hosts Leila, Deb, and Kerry candidly share their personal journeys of undergoing surgery while living with AiArthritis diseases. They delve into their surgical experiences, including the pivotal surgeries they've had due to their conditions. They discuss the preparations they navigated before surgery, the challenges they faced with doctor clearances and insurance, and provide valuable insights for fellow AiArthritis patients, including the crucial questions to ask healthcare professionals.

What Patients Need to Know about Surgery

- **Self-Advocacy:** Be assertive and persistent in communicating your needs and concerns to healthcare providers. If necessary, seek a second opinion to ensure you're making well-informed decisions.
- **Supportive Network:** Surround yourself with a strong support system, whether it's a partner, family, or online community. Emotional and practical support can significantly impact your recovery.
- **Understanding BMI Challenges:** Recognize that BMI restrictions might affect your surgical options. Some doctors may be cautious due to potential complications, so explore various options and consult with specialists.
- **Medication Management:** Understand the implications of surgery on your medications and supplements. Make sure to ask questions early so you can plan. Work closely with healthcare professionals to manage your medications before, during, and after the surgery to maintain your overall health.
- **Embrace Physical Therapy:** Engage actively in post-surgery physical therapy. It's instrumental in helping you regain mobility and strength, enhancing your overall recovery process.
- **Acknowledge Potential Positive Outcomes:** Remember that successful surgeries can significantly improve your quality of life, even when dealing with chronic conditions. Increased mobility and reduced pain are often achievable goals.

- **Leverage Online Communities:** Seek support from online communities and social media platforms. Engaging with others who have undergone similar experiences can offer valuable emotional support and practical advice.
- **Overcome Fear with Knowledge:** Educate yourself about the surgical process and potential benefits. Do as much research as possible and try to find others who have had the surgery to gain insight. Understanding the procedure and its positive outcomes can help alleviate fears associated with surgery.
- **Embrace Personal Growth:** Approach the surgery and recovery as an opportunity for personal growth. Through this experience, you can develop a deeper understanding of your body and its needs, fostering a sense of empowerment.
- **Be Gentle With Yourself:** Preparing for and recovering from surgery can be a grueling process. Most people also have to do this while dealing with everyday tasks and obligations. Don't be too harsh on yourself when things may go slower than you expect or if there are bumps in the road. Each person heals differently.
- **Remember That Each Person's Journey is Unique:** Tailor your approach based on your specific needs and circumstances, and don't hesitate to reach out for support when needed. Stay positive, stay informed, and trust in your ability to navigate this challenging experience.



Episode Details

- Deb discusses surgeries including bunion removal (which triggered her RA), cervical neck fusions, wrist fusion, total knee replacement, reconstructive foot surgeries, hysterectomy, and ovary removal. Kerry discusses her recent hip replacement due to severe degenerative arthritis and avascular necrosis caused by long-term steroid use. Leila discusses her gastric sleeve surgery, emphasizing the challenges faced due to her lupus medications.
- The conversation highlights the complexities of surgeries in the context of AiArthritis diseases, emphasizing the importance of personalized care, coordination among healthcare providers, and managing medication regimens for successful outcomes.