

Recovery after discharge

Physical Therapy

- You will have **home health/physical therapy working with you 2-3x a week for the first two weeks**. After this, it will be necessary to begin **formal outpatient physical therapy for an additional 2 weeks for hip replacements and about 4-6 weeks for knee replacements**.
 - o Knee replacements can get stiff and as such the post operative therapy is critical after a knee replacement. Range of motion exercises are not limited to therapy sessions and should be done every 1-2 hours on your own.
 - o Hip replacements your therapy for the first month is mostly walking and gradually returning to activities as tolerated. However, you will have to wean off assistive devices and maintain hip precautions for 12 weeks post operatively.

Pain Management

- Some degree of pain is normal and expected. You will improve gradually as your muscles become stronger and healing continues. This speed of recovery is different for every patient and you should not compare your recovery to another friend or relative.
- You will be discharged with pain medications. **You should wean off of these as tolerated by 4-6 weeks**. but it is expected you will need them in the immediate post operative period and for therapy.
- Pain medications can have common side effects of **constipation** which you should take a laxative, **nausea** which you should take medication with food, **itching** which can be alleviated with Benadryl, and **confusion** which you should stop taking pain medications and call our office if this occurs.
- Be aware of your ingestion of Tylenol if your pain medication has this in it, you should **not exceed 3000mg of Acetaminophen** as this can damage your liver.
- **If you require a pain medication refill, you will need to contact our office at least 3 days in advance to prescription running out. Prescriptions cannot be called into a pharmacy. You will need to pick up a prescription in one of our office locations depending on our clinic availability.**

Swelling

- **You will have swelling** of the post operative leg. Swelling may get worse with activity. It will likely get worse in the 2-3 days after discharge from the hospital. Typically swelling is correlated to pain. It can be helpful to elevate your extremity above the level of your heart and consistent use of **ice**. **Elevating your extremity** should not be done as to violate your hip precautions after a hip replacement, and no pillows should be placed under the knee after knee replacement surgery.
- You will have **compression stockings** that should remain on for 3 weeks following surgery. They should only be removed for hygiene purposes. These will help with the swelling.

Anticoagulation

- You will be placed on a blood thinner to prevent blood clots. You will need to take this as directed.

Wound Care

- **Your dressing should come off after 7 days. You may shower over this dressing**. Once it is removed, you may leave the wound open to air as so long there is no drainage. You can

continue to shower but **NO scrubbing the incision**, should pat dry. **NO soaking the wound in a bathtub, hot tub, pool, ocean etc. for at least 6 weeks after surgery.** Your incision will likely be glued on the skin and no sutures should need to be removed post operatively. You can begin putting on Vitamin E based lotions on the wound around 6-8 weeks post operatively when there is no remaining scabbing of the incision.

- If there is any drainage post operatively you should contact our office immediately

Antibiotics

- You will need to be placed **on prophylactic antibiotics prior to any dental procedure or cleanings**, any colonoscopy, cystoscopy, prostate or bladder surgery, kidney surgery or endoscopy. This will avoid risk of subsequent infection of your replacement. We prefer **Amoxicillin 2g one hour prior to procedure.** This can be given by our office or your dentist. Although controversial, we **prefer lifetime dental prophylaxis.**

Other Considerations

- No anti-inflammatories should be used for 3 weeks following surgery
- No driving for about 2-4 weeks following surgery on the left leg and about 4-6 weeks after surgery on the right leg. You will need to be off pain medications completely. You will need to be able to perform evasive driving maneuvers without hesitation.
- You can fly about 2 weeks post-operatively. However, we may recommend alternative blood thinners if this will take place.
- Return to work is patient specific. If a desk job, it may be 2-4 weeks for motivated individuals. Patients in strenuous or physical jobs may be out for 12 weeks.

Follow-up appointments

- Your **first post operative visit will be about 3 weeks** after surgery. You will have x-rays at this appointment
- Your second post operative visit will be about **3 months** after surgery. This will be for a clinical check only unless a reason arises for an x-ray
- Your third post operative visit will be about **1 year** after surgery. X-rays are taken at this time.