



Total Joint Replacement Discharge Instructions

Incisions Care

When you are discharged from the hospital, you will usually have a water resistant bandage over your incision site. You may shower with this bandage on. Change the bandage on day **seven** after your surgery. You will be given a different type of dressing to replace the surgical dressing. This is also waterproof. Should that dressing become wet, please remove it immediately. Once there is no more drainage noted on dry gauze pads, the incision has adequately dried up. You may now leave the incision open to the air. It's important to remember that you shouldn't immerse the incision site under water. On **day 14** after your surgery, as long as your incision has remained dry, you may shower normally and get your incision wet. Just pat it dry afterwards with a clean dry towel. You can then leave it open to the air. We usually don't recommend applying any lotions or creams to the incision until around 5-6 weeks after surgery. At that time, you'll also be able to immerse the incision in water (bath tub, ocean, or pool). **Contact us if you notice any new redness, swelling, or drainage that arises after your incision has already healed.** Also monitor your temperature daily. If your temp is greater than 101.5 and not relieved with acetaminophen, please call the office.

Activity

Use your first week at home to rest and allow your muscles and tissues to recover from the surgery. We ask that you participate in home therapy as taught by the in hospital physical therapists. We recommend taking a light walk 3-4 times per day. This is enough to keep your joint moving. We'll schedule you for outpatient therapy at your next visit with me. Be sure to elevate your extremity 2-3 times a day for at least a half hour at a time. This will help keep swelling to a minimum.

Diet

Resume a healthy diet when you return home. If your regular doctor has you on a low salt or diabetic diet, make sure that you follow these recommendations.

Sleep

It is quite common to have difficulty sleeping for the first month after a joint replacement. This is due to multiple things: anemia, pain, and changes in your medications. Eating well, avoiding caffeine, and not taking too many naps during the day help. Over the counter

Benadryl (25mg) can often help at night. If you're experiencing severe sleep disturbances, let us know at your first follow-up visit. We may prescribe a stronger sleeping pill.

Pain medications

Take the prescribed pain medications as directed only if you are experiencing pain. Light amounts of pain can be managed for mild pain, however, do not take this type of medication (Advil, Motrin, Aleve, or ibuprofen) if you have been prescribed Celebrex. Tylenol usage is still ok. It is also ok to take a pain pill before therapy sessions as long as you have someone to drive you to and from the therapy center.

Follow-up Appointment

You should have a follow-up appointment for 7-10 days after your discharge from the hospital. Call **800-943-8099** if you don't know the date or time of your appointment.

Driving

If you had surgery on your left leg, and you drive an automatic, you can drive as soon as your pain allows, and you are **no longer taking the prescribed pain medications**. You can drive after taking Tylenol or Celebrex. If you had surgery on your right leg, or drive a manual transmission, you should not drive a vehicle until after you've stopped taking prescription pain medication **AND** 4 weeks have passed since your surgery.

Constipation

Although it would be ideal for you to have a normal bowel movement before your discharge from the hospital, it's common not to have one for 5-6 days after surgery. This is directly related to how your intestinal system responds to the anesthetic medications and pain medications to which you've been exposed. It is highly recommended that you take either Senekot-S, Miralax or Colace after discharge while taking pain medications; these are over-the-counter medications and should help. Daily prune juice, caffeine and plenty of water should resolve this issue. If you experience persistent problems with constipation, we recommend using an over-the-counter laxative or enema available at many of the drug stores. If these remedies do not work for you, contact your primary doctor for recommendations.

Blood Thinners

We require you use a blood thinner for 4 weeks following your surgery to help reduce the risk of blood clots. Most of you will be on **Enteric Coated Aspirin-OTC** twice daily for 4 weeks. If you are prescribed **Lovenox**, we will instruct you and your family on how to administer the injections. If you notice a significant increase in swelling, accompanied by redness and/or an increase in pain, please contact our office immediately. We recommend that you come to the hospital for a simple ultrasound test to rule out a blood clot.

Swelling

Swelling after Hip and Knee replacements is very common. Do not be concerned if you notice swelling in your knee, calf, and even down to your foot and toes. **Elevate** your leg as high as comfortable at least 3 times during the day for 30-40 minutes at a time. This helps considerably. The second most important thing to use at home is **ICE**. I encourage you to place an ice pack or bag over your surgical site as much as possible during the day. Use a thin towel or two plastic bags so that the "sweat" from the ice pack does not leak onto the incision site. Again, **ICE** is very important for keeping the inflammation down. I encourage you to use ice for the first 4-5 weeks following your surgery. You will notice the difference if you do so. **Swelling peaks between days 3-7** after surgery, you may experience increased pain and stiffness during this period. It is extremely important to elevate your leg(s) at this time, in addition to keeping ice over your surgical site continuously, while at rest. **If you notice new swelling that does not seem to be associated with any increase in activity, or does not improve with elevation of your leg, call us please at 800-943-8099.**

Keep up the **GOOD WORK**. Call us if you have any concerns at **925-939-8585**.