Total Joint Replacement

MEDICAL ASSOCIATES
CLINIC & HEALTH PLANS®

Post-Operative Home Instructions

Joint Replacement Specialists

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Follow-up Appointments

6 weeks, 3 months, 6 months, 12 months

Staple Removal

2 weeks post-operatively. May be done at rehab facility or by visiting nurse at your home

Ice Packs

Use ice packs frequently to decrease pain

Walking

Weight-bearing as tolerated. Ideally, progress to one crutch or cane (use on non-operative side) as soon as able, then wean off completely when mobility regained.

Driving

No driving for 4-6weeks until adequate strength for emergency braking. No driving while using any narcotic medication

Lifting

No lifting until able to walk without a cane/crutch. No lifting more than 15 lbs for 4weeks

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Activity

Most patients use a walker initially and then progress to crutches or a cane for the first few weeks after surgery. You should walk as often as is comfortable and rest with your leg elevated to reduce swelling. Your entire leg should be elevated above your waist to decrease swelling (a foot stool is not high enough). It is recommended that you do not drive for at least 4-6 weeks following surgery. This may be longer if your surgery was on the right leg. You should be no longer using narcotic medication to drive. When you feel ready, you should practice stepping on the gas and brake before driving.

If you had a total hip replacement, your activity may be restricted for 3 months in order to follow the hip precautions taught to you during your hospital stay.

Wound Care

Your staples are usually removed in 14 days and can be removed by the visiting nurse or at your rehab facility. You may shower, but do not soak in a bathtub. Wash with only mild soap and water and pat the wound dry. Do not rub or scratch the wound. Do NOT use ointments, alcohol, peroxide, or Vitamin E lotions. Just clean and dry your wound.

The wound may appear pink initially and will not reach its final appearance until 18 months. Feelings of numbness, tingling, or itchiness are common and normal. These feelings will go away in time.

Pain

Generally pain medication is used for one month following surgery. You will be provided with a prescription for pain relief medication when you are discharged from the hospital. If you are running low or due a refill, please call the office a few days before you run out. Be sure to provide your name, date of birth, medical record number, pharmacy phone number, and home phone number when you call. If the information is not complete, we will not be able to process your prescription.

Physical Therapy

It is very important that you work hard in physical therapy. You must practice the stretches and exercises that they teach you between sessions in order to get the full success of your new joint replacement. Plan to take your pain medication 1 hour before your therapy appointment. This will help you be more comfortable during the therapy.

Call if You Notice Any

- Calf Pain or Swelling
- Increasing Pain, Swelling, or Warmth at the Incision Site
- Unusual or Purulent (pus) fluid at the Incision Site
- Fever more than 101.5 degrees