
Discharge Instructions for Total Hip Replacement Surgery

You had a hip replacement surgery. This means your natural hip was replaced with an artificial joint (prosthesis). You may be recovering at home or in a rehabilitation facility. Either way, you must take care of your new hip. Do this by moving and sitting the way you were taught in the hospital. Also be sure to see your healthcare provider for follow-up visits and return to activity slowly. A total hip replacement is major surgery. So it will be a few months before you can move comfortably.

Home care

- Take your pain medicine exactly as directed.
- Don't drive until your healthcare provider says it's OK. And never drive while taking opioid pain medicine.
- You may be given support stockings. If so, wear them as instructed by your surgeon. You may need these for 4 to 6 weeks after surgery.
- To relieve discomfort at night, get up and move around.
- Tell all your healthcare providers—including your dentist—about your artificial joint before any procedure. You may need to take antibiotics before dental work and other medical procedures to reduce the risk of infection.
- If you have staples or sutures to close your incision, arrange to have them removed around 2 weeks after surgery. Follow your provider's specific instructions.

Incision care

- Check your incision daily for redness, swelling, tenderness, or drainage.
- Prevent infection by washing your hands often. If an infection occurs, it will need to be treated right away. Call your healthcare provider right away if you think you may have an infection. Symptoms include a fever, chills, redness, warmth, or an incision that leaks white, green, or yellow fluid.
- Don't soak your incision in water until your provider says it's OK. This means no hot tubs, bathtubs, or swimming pools.
- Follow your surgeon's instructions on when it's OK to shower. You may be told to wait 5 to 7 days after your surgery to start showering. Carefully wash your incision with soap and water. Gently pat it dry. Don't rub the incision or apply creams or lotions to it. And to prevent falling when showering, sit on a shower stool.

Sitting and sleeping

- Don't sit for more than 30 to 45 minutes at a time.
- Use chairs with arms and sit with your knees slightly lower than your hips. Don't sit on low or sagging chairs or couches.

- Don't lean forward while sitting.
- Don't cross your legs.
- Keep your feet flat on the floor. Don't turn your foot or leg inward. This stresses your hip joint.
- If needed, use a raised toilet seat for 6 weeks after surgery.
- Ask your healthcare provider if it's OK to sleep on your stomach or on the side that has the new hip. Use pillows between your legs when sleeping on your back or on your side.
- Sit on a firm cushion when you ride in a car and don't sit too low. Try not to bend your hip too much when getting in and out of the car.

Moving safely

- Don't bend at the hip when you bend over. Don't bend at the waist to put on socks and shoes. And don't pick up items from the floor.
- Use a cane, crutches, a walker, or handrails until your balance, flexibility, and strength improve. And remember to ask for help from others when you need it.
- Free up your hands so that you can use them to keep balance. Use a fanny pack, apron, or pockets to carry things.
- Follow your healthcare provider's orders about how much weight to put on the affected leg.
- Walk often and do prescribed exercises as instructed.
- Arrange your household to keep the items you need within reach.
- Remove electrical cords, throw rugs, and anything else that may cause you to fall.
- Use nonslip bath mats, grab bars, a raised toilet seat, and a shower chair in your bathroom.

Follow-up

Make a follow-up appointment as directed by your healthcare provider.

Call 911

Call 911 right away if you have any of the following:

- Chest pain
- Shortness of breath

When to call your healthcare provider

Call your healthcare provider right away if you have any of the following:

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- Hip pain gets worse
 - Pain or swelling in your calf or leg not related to your incision
 - Tenderness or redness in your calf
 - Fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher, or as directed by your healthcare provider
 - Shaking chills
 - Swelling or redness at the incision site that gets worse
 - Fluid draining from the incision