

# Your Surgery: Recovery

The type of surgery you've had will determine when you can go home as well as how to care for yourself when you get there. Your doctor will give you instructions specific to your surgery, but there are some general guidelines to consider.

*"What determines whether you go home after the procedure or not is whether you're going to be safe being at home after the procedure. That's determined by how much the procedure is going to affect your mobility or your awareness."*

Prepared for a lack of mobility after her hip surgery, Martha Moore took her surgeon's advice and lined up people to help her once she got home.

*"I have people watering, cutting my grass, bringing me meals, staying with me. You need to ask people to be part of this process because you can't do it alone."*

You should also rest for at least the first 24 hours after surgery, and then limit your activity for several days. Your surgeon will tell you when you can resume any exercise or vigorous activity. The bottom line is take it slow. Allow your body to heal.

*"Being able to walk to the grocery store or a department store or just to get things done around the house. It was very limiting so I'm looking forward to having this taken care of and resuming a normal life."*

Controlling pain and staying ahead of it is important after any surgery. Take your pain medications as prescribed. Never take more without consulting your surgeon.

*"After any surgical procedure, the patient should have control of that pain. Not total absence of pain, but at a tolerable level."*

*"We've got a good idea by the time they're going home what their requirements are and then we send them home on the same thing that's working for them here with the idea that they'll gradually taper off of that."*

Your surgeon may also recommend other ways to relieve pain; perhaps elevating an affected arm or leg to relieve swelling, or applying ice, for example. Always follow their instructions.

The same is true for antibiotics which protect against infection. If your surgeon prescribed them, take them until they are completely gone. Don't stop, even if you're feeling better.

Speaking of infection, be on the lookout for any possible signs that something's not quite right.

These signs could include: Increased redness or tenderness around your surgical wound; Red streaks or pus; Fever.

Also, watch for any allergic reaction to medicines you may be taking. This might include itching, redness or a rash, shortness of breath, or wheezing.

Blood clots are another concern after surgery.

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*“Signs of a blood clot unfortunately are oftentimes not very noticeable. But swelling or pain in an area of the limb that wasn’t operated on can be a sign of that, or certainly any difficulty breathing or pain in the chest or things like that.”*

If you’re experiencing any possible signs of infection, of allergic reactions, of blood clots, call your healthcare provider immediately.

*“Whenever I do surgery, the patient is given two numbers when they leave. The number of the nursing station at the hospital that they had the surgery performed at, and our office number. And there is somebody available 24/7 at both of those numbers. So, they have access to information if they’re having a problem.”*

Preparing well for surgery and following the advice of her healthcare providers is paying off for Martha. She’s back at work, enjoying the newfound mobility that her hip surgery provided.

*“I think knowledge also helps you be an advocate for yourself and that’s as important as anything else. So you know the questions to ask, you come prepared, and you get the answers you need.”*