

Joint Replacement Recovery: Incision Care

While you are healing from joint replacement surgery, you need to properly care for your incision. The pain from your incision will decrease as you heal, but it will take about six to eight weeks for the area to completely heal, so be patient. Follow this checklist to make sure you are healing safely after surgery.

DO: Keep your incision dry and covered with a light bandage. Your healthcare provider will let you know when you are able to shower. Swelling is common after your surgery.

DO: Ice the incision regularly to keep the swelling down.

DO: Check your incision each day for signs of infection. Signs of infection include increased drainage, redness, pain, odor, or heat around the incision, and a temperature above 100.4 degrees. If you have any of these symptoms, call your healthcare provider.

Do Not: Touch the incision directly until it is healed. Only change your bandages if your doctor recommends it.

Do Not: Apply any lotions or powders to the area until your incision is completely healed. **Do Not:** Soak your incision area in a bath or swimming pool until your healthcare provider says it is okay -- usually about 4 weeks after surgery.

Proper incision care is key to a healthy recovery. Follow this checklist to make sure you are healing properly at home.