

Hip Replacement Surgery: Returning Home

After you have a hip replacement, it will take time to heal and make your hip strong again. Your doctor will talk to you about when you can work and when you can get back to all of your daily routines.

But at first, you'll need someone to help you at home until you have more energy and can move around better. Over the next 3 to 6 weeks, you'll increase your ability to do most of the things you need to do to take care of yourself.

Most people are able to return to work between 4 weeks to 4 months. It depends on the type of work you do. And over the next few months, you'll gradually be able to do most of your favorite activities.

And remember for the first few months, your doctor may want you to avoid things that could be a problem for your hip. They'll also tell you how much weight you can put on your leg.

Now, it may take some time before you can drive. This depends on things like which hip was replaced, how you're recovering, and if your car has an automatic transmission or not. Work with your doctor to determine when the time is right for you.

Recovery takes time. It's important to take care and be patient with yourself. Once you're home, here are things you can do to help yourself get better. Be sure to follow any instructions about diet or activity and take medicines as prescribed. And follow any instructions for incision care.

Ask your doctor about when you can take the bandage off and when it's okay to shower. You may need to take sponge baths until your stitches or staples have been removed. While you're at the hospital or surgery center, you'll learn how to walk with a walker, crutches, or a cane.

And by the time you leave the hospital, you'll be able to safely sit down and stand up, dress yourself, use the toilet, and bathe. You'll start physical therapy right away. And you'll learn exercises to help you get stronger. You'll also be taught how to move your body so you can avoid problems.

To prevent falls, you'll need to clear your pathways of things like cords and throw rugs. And make sure you have plenty of light where you walk. Now, having hip surgery can increase your risk for a blood clot. So if your doctor gave you medicine to prevent a blood clot, it is very important to take it.

And just as important is to keep moving. Try to limit your time in bed, and take short walks when you can. If you have pain, use an ice pack for about 10 to 20 minutes a few times each day. Put a thin cloth between the ice and your skin.

Here are some things to watch for. Call your doctor if you have any bleeding or signs of infection, such as increased pain, swelling, warmth, or redness; red streaks leading from the area; pus draining from the area; or a fever.

Also watch for signs of a blood clot. These include leg pain, redness, swelling in the leg, shortness of breath, or chest pain. These are serious symptoms so if you have any of them, get emergency help right away.

Now, this may seem like a lot to do but all these things are important because they can help you heal and feel better. And remember, if you have any questions, you can always call your doctor.