

Discharge Instructions

The patient having a Total Hip Replacement usually has many questions when planning home recovery. Hopefully the **Do's, Don'ts** and **Additional Suggestions** listed below will help to answer some of your questions.

Please refer to the Precautions Section of this book.

Activity:

- **Do** follow weight bearing as instructed by your doctor.
- **Do** keep your legs apart and in proper alignment.
- **Don't** let your feet turn inward when lying, sitting, or standing for at least six weeks after surgery.
- **Do** use pillows between your legs when turning in bed for six weeks after surgery. This helps prevent hip dislocation.
- **Do** sit in a chair, such as a firm straight backed chair with arms, which helps maintain good hip alignment and makes standing and sitting easier.
- **Don't** sit in a chair so low or soft that your knees are higher than your hips.
- **Do** use your elevated toilet seat for at least six weeks after surgery.
- **Do** wear loose clothing that allows free movement of your legs. Avoid tight clothing (for example, panty hose or tight pants) and high heels.
- **Do** continue the exercises you were doing in the hospital as taught by your therapists. Once you return to normal activity, continue to do your exercises 2-3 times a week to keep your leg strong.
- **Do** walk as much as you can but avoid becoming too tired. Your operative leg may swell. Always elevate your leg while sitting or lying.
- **Do** try to limit your stair climbing for six weeks after your surgery. If your home has stairs, try to limit climbing stairs to 1-2 times each day if possible.
- **Do** ask your doctor when sexual activity can be resumed.
- **Do** continue to wear your elastic stockings for six weeks after surgery and/or until your first doctor visit. Wear them during the day and take them off at bedtime. You may wish to ask for help when putting the stocking on your

operative leg or use your sock aid as instructed.

- **Do** continue with follow-up care after discharge. Call the doctor's office and schedule an appointment before you leave the hospital. Often this saves a long distance call. The nursing staff can assist you with this.
- **Do** tell your doctor or dentist that you had hip replacement surgery if you require any of the following: dental work, other surgery, diagnostic procedures, or you think you might have an infection. The doctor may wish to order antibiotics for you before any of these procedures to prevent the possibility of an infection developing in your joint replacement.
- **Do** keep your incision dry. Don't apply any lotion or soap to the incision.
- **Do** ask your doctor when you may take a tub bath or shower. Usually no shower or tub baths are allowed until the sutures /staples are removed.
- **Don't** drive a car until your doctor says you can.
- **Do** be as active as you can tolerate, but not to the point of exhaustion.
- **Do not** do heavy housework. Get someone to help you.
- **Do not** attempt to lift or carry anything over 5 pounds.
- **Do not** carry things with your arms when using a walker, crutches or cane.
- **Do** take your pain medication 1/2 hour before any activity.

Medications:

- **Do** call your doctor if you have any questions about your medications, or are unable to take your medications.

Pain Medications:

- You will probably receive prescriptions for pain medications for use at home. Take them as directed. Medications that relieve pain can make you sleepy and slow your reflexes and responses. For safety, do not operate a car for 24 hours after taking a pain medication.
- Pain medications are also constipating. You may wish to take a laxative or use a stool softener while taking these medications. Drinking 6-8 glasses of water each day will also help lower the chance of constipation.

Anticoagulants:

- Anticoagulants are blood thinners that help prevent blood clots. Depending on the medicine your doctor orders upon discharge, you may need to have blood drawn to monitor how thin your blood is.

Stitches/Staples/Incision:

- Your stitches/staples are usually removed 7 - 10 days after your surgery.

Deep Breathing and Coughing:

- Continue to do deep breathing and coughing exercises using your incentive spirometer after your discharge.

When to Call the Doctor

- Let your doctor know right away if you have any loss or change of feeling, or numbness in your legs or toes.
- Call your doctor immediately if you have any pain or tenderness in your calf.
- Call 911 immediately if you have chest pain or difficulty breathing.
- Watch for increased swelling of your leg. If this happens, elevate your leg whenever you are not up walking and call your doctor.
- Check your temperature in the morning and at night. Take your temperature more often if you feel warm. Call your doctor if your temperature is 101° or higher.
- Call your doctor if you have an increase in redness, tenderness, and/or swelling around your incision or joint.
- Call your doctor if you have any new or increase drainage from your incision line.
- Call your doctor if you have an increase in pain around your incision or joint and/or the pain is not relieved with pain medication or elevation of your leg. Your pain should decrease from day to day. If it is getting more severe, call your doctor.