



PATIENT INSTRUCTIONS TOTAL JOINT REPLACEMENT

Please read these instructions and refer to this sheet during the next few weeks. These discharge instructions provide you with general information on caring for yourself after you leave the hospital. Your doctor may also give you *specific* instructions. While your treatment has been planned according to the most current medical practices available, unavoidable complications occasionally occur. If you have any problems or questions after discharge, please call your doctor. Your binder also has information that may help answer questions you may have.

ACTIVITY

- Your binder has specific instructions for you regarding activity. Your physical therapist has reviewed your limitations with you. Hip precautions are outlined in your binder.
- Weight bear as instructed by your MD or physical therapist (you may progress from a walker to a cane).
- May shower with incision covered (use press and seal over dressing).

INCISION CARE

Proper care of your incision can help prevent infection. It is important to check your incision every day. Wash your hands before touching the incision *if* you have to touch the incision for any reason.

- Leave dressing applied to incision for 7 days or your first post-op visit.
- **Remove Dressing on:** _____
- **To shower: Cover dressing with Glad press and seal. Once dressing is off,** wash your incision and the skin around it gently with soap and water. Pat incision dry with clean towel. Do NOT rub the towel over your incision. NO tub baths, avoid swimming pools and hot tubs until incision is completely healed. This is about 3 weeks after surgery.

- Do NOT use any creams, lotions, ointments, or alcohol on or near your incision.
- You can remove steri-strips after 2 weeks.
- Avoid smoking while the incision is in the healing phase.
- If you have diabetes; better management of your blood glucose levels will help with wound healing.

INFECTION PREVENTION

- Make sure that you are washing your hands frequently; hand washing is the best way to prevent the spread of infection.
- Wash your hands after using the restroom, coughing, or sneezing and before meals.
- Wash your hands before touching your incision, removing the steri-strips, or changing the dressing.
- Keep fresh incision covered if you are going to be around pets or small children.

CALL YOUR SURGEON

Call your surgeon for any of the following:

- Temperature > 101° F
- Increased redness or swelling or drainage from or around your incision
- Pain not relieved by pain medication
- Nausea or vomiting
- Chest pain or sudden shortness of breath
- Severe calf pain
- Questions/concerns

NUTRITION

- Resume diet as tolerated
- To prevent constipation
 - Increase fluids
 - Increase fiber (fruits/vegetables/bran)
 - Prunes, prune juice
- May use over the counter laxative if needed (Miralax, Milk of Magnesia, etc)
- Stool softeners will make it easier to have a BM without the laxative effect
- Ambulation will help with constipation

PHYSICAL THERAPY AT HOME

- In-home physical therapy for 3 to 7 days after discharge.
- After one week (sooner if comfortable), start outpatient physical therapy.
- Call the office for an outpatient physical therapy prescription when you are ready to start outpatient therapy.

PHYSICAL THERAPY AT REHAB

- If you are discharged to a rehab facility you will have physical therapy while you are there as ordered by your MD.
- They will give you instructions for home when you are discharged.

COMFORT/PAIN

- Take pain medication as prescribed by your surgeon.
- Apply ice/cold packs to affected hip/knee as much as you can for comfort.
- Pain pills can cause constipation.

MEDICATIONS

Medications will be individualized to patient upon discharge. **Resume preoperative medications as discussed with RN on day of discharge. See medication form for discharge medications.**

PAIN MEDICATIONS

There are several options for pain medicine.

Your MD and nurse will discuss what you will be sent home on.

DO NOT take more than a total of 4 grams (4000 milligrams) of acetaminophen (Tylenol) in a 24 hour period. Some pain medications have Tylenol in them, it is important to know this when you are calculating your daily dose of Tylenol.

BLOOD THINNERS (anticoagulants):

You will be on one of these regiments

1. **Lovenox** as directed
2. **Coumadin** as directed
3. **EC ASA** as directed
4. **Other** per RN:

While on blood thinners:

- Avoid razors-use electric razors
- If you get cut, apply pressure to the site and call your MD if the bleeding won't stop
- Avoid Aspirin unless otherwise instructed by your MD

Do not take any herbal medications until follow up visit (fish oil, glucosamine, etc).

Do not take any non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS) including ibuprofen, Aleve, Advil, or Motrin until follow up visit, unless otherwise instructed by your MD. (Note: hip resurfacing patients will take Indocin for 6 weeks.)

OTHER INSTRUCTIONS

Allow extra time at the airport for security reasons.

No dental procedures for 6 weeks (includes teeth cleaning).

For dental procedures, other surgeries, or any test/procedure where bleeding may occur (cardiac cath, biopsy, etc), it is recommended that you take antibiotics prior to the procedure.

- You will be given a card to show your dentist/doctor about the antibiotics when you return for your post-op visit.

HIP REPLACEMENT PATIENTS ONLY

- Follow your Hip Precautions per the instructions given to you by your Surgeon and Physical Therapy.

FOLLOW UP APPOINTMENT(S)

Follow up with your doctor(s) as scheduled.

In the event of an emergency:

Call 911 and/or go to St. Joseph's Hospital Emergency Department or closest emergency department.

Patient Signature-I have read and understand these instructions.

RN Signature-I have reviewed these instructions with the patient.

(Copy these instructions and place in chart)