
Instructions Following Hip or Knee Surgery

Medications

- Coated aspirin (Ecotrin 81 mg) one tablet twice each day with food for **one month** to help prevent blood clots, if you are not on another blood thinner.
- If another blood thinner is prescribed, like Eliquis or Xarelto, then do **not** take the aspirin.
- Take your other medications as written on the Medicine Reconciliation Form from the hospital.
- **Pain medicine** as prescribed. Don't be afraid of the pain medicine as the first two weeks are tough. We expect you to be off your pain medicine by four weeks after hip surgery and by six weeks after knee surgery. Everyone needs pain medication for at least three weeks.
- Take an over the counter stool softener like MiraLAX, Milk of Magnesia, suppositories or a Fleets enema every day while on pain medicine.

Activities

- Wear one TED stocking on your operated leg, after knee surgery, to hold the dressing in place until your clips are removed.
- Some patients like a pillow either between or underneath their leg after surgery.
- Sit in a firm normal height chair as it is easier to stand up. Periodically elevate your legs.
- **While sitting**, always put your arms between your knees if you have to bend over for any reason like putting on your shoes. If it feels too tight, then stop.
- **While standing**, bend your knees when bending over to pick something up rather than just bending at your waist.
- While both sitting and standing, do not twist or force anything.
- Shower when you feel safe. Soap and water may run over your incision, which is okay.
- **After the clips or sutures are removed**, keep your incision dry for 24 hours and then remove the steri-strips after three days. Cover the dressing with a bandage only if you are still having a little drainage. Change the dressing every day and as needed.
- You may **drive** when you feel safe, which is usually about three weeks after surgery.
- **Traveling** two or more hours away from home is allowed one month after surgery.
- You may progress to a **cane** whenever you feel safe. Use the cane for one full month after surgery, so the bone can grow to the implant and your soft tissues can heal. You may get rid of the cane anytime after one month when you feel safe without it.
- **Excessive walking** in the first month after surgery will just increase your pain and swelling and will not make you get better, quicker. It could also interfere with you bending your knee and with the bone growing to the hip or knee implant to stabilize it for long term function. Increase your walking after one month.

Exercises

- See the SAFTE and Thigh-strengthening Exercise handouts.

What to Expect and Our Goals for You

- Pain – Take your pain medication often to keep the pain under control. The first two weeks are the worst. We expect you to be off your pain medication by four weeks after hip surgery and by six weeks after knee surgery.

- Swelling, warmth and bruising is common in the entire leg for three months. There are stitches underneath the skin and deep around the joint that take three and a half months to dissolve.
- Fatigue – You will be worn out for a month. It is okay to take naps.
- Sleep – Unfortunately you will not sleep through the night for a month.
- After knee surgery, we expect you to bend your knee **past 90 degrees by two weeks and 125 degrees by six weeks** as well as getting your leg fully straight. We will get therapy involved if you have trouble hitting these goals. Otherwise, you are the therapist and we expect you to do these exercises for at least one year. Hips and knees improve for 18 months after surgery.

When to Call Our Office

- If your temperature is over 102 degrees.
- If you experience increased drainage, redness and pain from the incision.
- **Call 911 if you experience chest pain or shortness of breath.**