

## Surgery & Procedure Information

# After Your Anterior Hip Replacement Surgery

## Direct Anterior & Anterolateral Approach

### After surgery

After surgery, you will be moved to the recovery room. When you wake up from surgery you will still have an IV in your arm. This will be disconnected shortly and the IV will be removed before you go home. After you are awake and comfortable, 1 to 2 of your visitors may come see you for a short visit.

Remember that everyone heals at a different speed. In general, this is what you can expect.

#### General phases of recovery:

1. Phase 1 = getting through surgery and discharge to home (about 24 hours)
2. Phase 2 = early healing, NO falls, incision healing (about 2 weeks)
3. Phase 3 = ROM, strength, activities of daily living (about 3 months)
4. Phase 4 = full strength, full activities (about 1 year)

#### Nutrition

Your nurse will let you know when you are able to eat and drink after surgery. You will start with water and clear liquids, then will gradually eat solid foods. A healthy diet helps your body heal.

- Eat a variety of healthy foods, like lean proteins and vegetables.
- Drinking water and eating fiber helps prevent constipation. Eat high fiber foods like fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole grain breads and cereals.
- Some people don't feel like eating after surgery. Although you may not be hungry, try to eat healthy foods or drink nutritional shakes. Call your primary care provider if your appetite does not get better.

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## Postoperative comfort plan

It is normal for your incision to feel painful, itchy, burning, or numb. Your nurse will ask you about your pain level. Ask for pain medicine when you need it.

You should feel comfortable enough to move, cough, breathe deeply, eat, and get out of bed without feeling too much pain. If you are feeling a lot of pain, tell us right away. There are many ways to manage your comfort.

- **Relax** and deep breathe = more oxygen and less pain.
- **Distraction:** Take your mind off any discomforts by doing something else (adult coloring pages, games, reading, etc.).
- **Reposition:** Change positions as needed at least every hour during the daytime.
- **Pick** an area in your home where you will be able to comfortably rest, ice, and elevate your operative leg.
- **Ice and elevate** for 20 to 30 minutes at a time, several times each day with at least 20 minute breaks between icing.
  - » Wrap ice packs in a towel. Do not put the ice on your bare skin.



**To elevate, remember to keep your toes above your nose!**

## Medicines

You may be prescribed new medicines to take after your surgery. Review your medicine instructions in your After Visit Summary from the hospital. These may include anti-inflammatory medicine, pain medicine or blood thinning medicine. Constipation may occur after surgery as

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a side effect of new medicines, not drinking enough fluids and decreased activity. Constipation can be uncomfortable and may prevent eating a healthy diet. To help prevent constipation, you should use a combination of things.

- Drink plenty of fluids, up to 8 glasses of water per day (unless your doctor tells you to limit fluids).
- Decrease the use of opioid (narcotic) pain medicine. These are typically called:
  - » Oxycodone
  - » Hydrocodone
  - » Hydromorphone
  - » Percocet
  - » Vicodin
- Stay active. Get up and move as you are able.
- Eat prunes or drink prune juice. These are natural laxatives. Try this before using laxative medicines.

If you are still constipated, a stool softener or laxative may help. There are many types of these medicines.

- Some are medicines like bisacodyl (Dulcolax®), senna (Senakot®), or docusate sodium (Colace®).
- Some contain extra fiber like Metamucil®.
- Take these medicines as directed.

If these ideas have not helped, contact your surgeon's office at 207-781-1551.

### **Exercise & activity**

You will be able to stand up a few hours after surgery with the help of a trained therapist or nurse. Moving around early on in the recovery process will help you heal faster.

The trained therapist or nurse will encourage you to walk in the hall and will show you how to do some exercises. They will teach you how to safely walk, get in and out of bed, climb stairs, and how to make your daily routine safe while you heal at home.

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## Healing at home

After you are sent home (discharged), you will likely be full weight-bearing and walking on crutches or with a walker. You will use a walker for 1 to 2 weeks after surgery, then you will use a cane for 1 to 2 weeks after that.

Pay close attention to the instructions in your After Visit Summary. These instructions will include information about discomfort management, medicines, activity, exercise, blood clot prevention, and diet.

At home, increase your activity over time (walking, exercises, chores). Do more activities each day with rest periods throughout the day. Keeping a diary or journal after you're home is very helpful for you and your helper. This tool will help you have a great recovery tracking your progress over the days and weeks ahead. Remember, asking for help is temporary! As you get stronger you will be able to do more for yourself and others.

After surgery, your helper may help you with any of the following tasks:

- They can be a second set of eyes and ears for instructions given by your care team
- Dressing assistance (laying out your clothes, helping with shoes, etc.)
- Remind you to change your position at least hourly to prevent stiffness and blood clots during the day
- Reporting any health concerns to the surgeon
- Help with showering or sponge baths (see below for tips)
- Managing medicines
- Preparing meals
- Light housekeeping
- Errands
- Transportation to and from appointments

One of the most important roles of the helper is being positive and providing support, reinforcement and encouragement throughout the healing process.

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## Showering

Getting in and out of the shower can be very tiring. The heat from the shower can be soothing, but it may make you more unsteady. After your surgeon has told you that it is safe for you to shower, follow these instructions:

- Ask a loved one or friend to stay nearby in case you lose your balance.
- Use the handles and non-slip bathmat to help you keep your balance.
- Use a handheld shower nozzle if possible.
- Sit on a shower seat/chair if you feel unsteady on your feet. Have a chair close by the shower.
- Use a long-handled sponge to wash hard to reach areas.

## Follow-up appointments

You will be seen in our office within 2 weeks after your surgery for incision care and to make sure you are healing properly. You will have another follow-up appointment within 6 to 8 weeks after surgery. It is important that you come to these follow-up appointments.

## Continuing to heal

### Activity

As you heal from surgery, your body will continue to get stronger each day. Slowly increase your activity and movement. Listen to your body and take breaks when you need it.

- Go for walks and do the strengthening exercises that your care team showed you.
- Start by doing a few light chores around the house. Ask for help with laundry, cleaning, cooking, and pet care.

### Relaxation and breathing

Recovering from surgery can be stressful. Be sure to do some relaxation and breathing techniques to help you during this time.

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Try these ideas:

- Breathing exercises — slow, deep breathing can reduce stress and pain.
- Sleep — make sure you are getting enough sleep.
- Music — music that is calming and enjoyable can help with relaxation.
- Guided imagery — guides your mind and helps you relax.
- Meditation — helps focus your mind to relax.

**Keep the following instructions in mind as you heal:**

- Continue to do the exercises that you were taught at the hospital.
- A surgical bandage will be used to cover up your incision. It is important to keep this in place to lower the risk of infection.
  - » Do not take this off until your first follow up appointment at your surgeon's office.
- Do not drive until your surgeon says it is safe for you to do so.
- Sleep in clean pajamas and wear clean clothes at home to prevent infection.
- Keep pets off of your bed or chairs and away from your incision.
- Avoid situations in which you might fall or be knocked over.
- Avoid pushing off with the operative leg when climbing stairs and getting out of a chair for 6 weeks after surgery.
- If you are planning a trip after your surgery, please talk to your surgeon first. We do not recommend going on a long trip away from home for at least 6 weeks after surgery.

## Where to go for care

It is important to avoid going to the emergency room after surgery unless it is truly needed.

**When to call your surgeon's office**

- Increased redness or drainage around the incision site
- Severe pain that is not lessened with rest, ice, elevation, or medicine
- Fever about 101°F and/or shaking chills

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- New rash on your body without difficulty breathing or swallowing
- A fall that didn't result in hitting your head
- The incision opens up
- Refills for pain medicine or other medicines prescribed by your surgeon or orthopedic team

### When to call your PCP's office

- Illness that isn't related to your surgery
  - » Sore throat
  - » High blood pressure
  - » Sinus pain
  - » Increased feelings of depression or anxiety
- Refills for home medicines

### When to call 911 or go to the emergency room

- Chest pain
- Difficulty breathing
- A fall that resulted in hitting your head or caused extreme pain
- New rash on your body with difficulty breathing or swallowing

### For More Information

Please call us if you have any questions or concerns.  
We are here to help you have a safe and successful surgery.

#### **MaineHealth Orthopedics and Sports Medicine**

5 Bucknam Road, Suite 1D, Falmouth Maine 04105  
207-781-1551

Office hours: Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

[mainehealth.org/jointedu](http://mainehealth.org/jointedu)

