

# Preparing for your Hip or Knee Replacement



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## Preparations for the days and weeks prior to your procedure

- **Obtain medical clearance/optimization** for surgery from your primary care physician 2-4 weeks before your surgery.
- **Obtain preoperative labs, xrays, and EKGs** as advised by your surgeon or other physician.
- Discontinue use of aspirin and NSAIDs (ibuprofen, Advil, Motrin, naproxen, Aleve) 10 days prior to your planned surgery. These medications may cause increased bleeding during the operation or postoperative period. If aspirin, Plavix, Coumadin or another blood-thinning drug is prescribed for a specific health condition, please discuss with your physician. There are exceptions to this guideline, so please ask if you are unsure. Often, you may resume taking these medications the first day following surgery.
- **Schedule a dental examination** and complete any needed dental procedures prior to joint replacement surgery. Dental procedures allow bacteria to enter the bloodstream and may cause you to be at higher risk of a post-surgical infection.

- **Decrease smoking/nicotine use.** Smoking and nicotine use impair postoperative healing and increase risks of various complications related to surgery and anesthesia.
- Discontinue herbal supplements ten days prior to surgery, as these may interact unpredictably with anesthesia medications.

## Arrangements for the day of surgery

- Sage West surgery department should contact you the day before your surgery to confirm the time of your procedure and when you are expected to arrive at the hospital. If you have not heard from the surgical staff by 3PM on the day preceding your procedure, please contact Fremont Orthopaedics.
- **Nothing to eat or drink past midnight** the evening prior to surgery, unless advised otherwise. You may take daily medications with sips of water only.
- **Diabetic patients:** please do not take insulin or oral hypoglycemic meds the day of surgery.
- **Take a shower** the evening before or the morning of your surgery. Wash your operative leg with gentle soap. Avoid harsh scrubbing.

- **DO NOT SHAVE** the operative area.
- Wear glasses rather than contacts; leave jewelry and valuables at home. Do bring any daily and as needed medications in their original prescription bottles. Pack loose clothing and sturdy shoes for when you are ready to be discharged home.
- **Most patients will be admitted to the hospital for 1-2 nights following surgery.** You will have the chance to discuss your surgery with the surgeon both before and after the procedure and will see them subsequently in the hospital until your discharge.
- Your actual surgical time will be 1-2 hours. Following surgery, you will be transferred to the recovery room for 1-2 hours before being transferred to a hospital room.

## What to expect during your hospital stay

- **Your incision** will be covered with gauze and possibly an ACE wrap. The dressing will be changed as needed. Some temporary bleeding and oozing of your incision is normal. The nursing staff will help you to ice and elevate your leg to improve postoperative swelling and pain.

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- **Early mobilization** after total knee or hip surgery is very important for your rehabilitation and the avoidance of complications. You will begin working with a physical therapist the same day as your surgery to sit at the edge of the bed and to walk with the assistance of a walker.
- Your surgeon will prescribe a combination of blood-thinning medication, elastic stockings, and compressive leg devices to prevent the formation of deep vein thrombosis (blood clots) following surgery.
- The nursing and respiratory therapy staff will coach you on regular coughing and deep breathing and the use of an incentive spirometer device. These measures help to open the lower airways to prevent pneumonia and improve patient weaning from supplemental oxygen.
- Pain management will be achieved through a combination of icing, elevation, and narcotic and anti-inflammatory medications.

## Anticipating your home rehabilitation needs after surgery

- **Most total joint replacement patients will require some assistance with dressing, bathing, cooking, and driving for several weeks after surgery.** We encourage you to arrange for a family member or friend to participate in your hospital discharge teaching and after hospital care.
- **Prepare your home** by creating a safe environment for your recovery. It is very **important to avoid falls** after surgery. Eliminate things on the floor that may be trip and fall hazards, such

as throw rugs or cords. Move things that are required for daily living to an easy to reach location. Ensure a clear pathway from your bed to the bathroom.

- **Obtain a walker** for assistance with walking after surgery. Most patients find walkers helpful for 2-6 weeks following surgery. Walkers are available for purchase at most pharmacies or for rent from some community organizations, such as the Lander Senior Center.
- Most patients find it more comfortable to sit on an elevated surface of a chair or couch. You can build up the surface height using a firm pillow or folded blanket. It is often easier to get in/out of furniture with sturdy arms on each side.
- **Adaptive devices** such as raised toilet seats, long-handled sponges, long-handled shoe horns, and a grabbing device may be helpful for hygiene, dressing, and other daily activities.
- Following surgery, **regular icing sessions** will help to control postoperative pain and swelling. Ice your joint for 20-40 minutes at a time, several times a day. It is easiest to apply ice in a form that will mold to your joint, i.e. blue gel ice packs or bags of crushed ice. Do not apply ice to bare skin. Circulating cold water machines are very helpful, but may be costly. Some patients are able to borrow one from a friend or family member.
- Return to work and following these procedures is patient specific. Most patients find that the first 6 weeks after surgery are largely dedicated to their rehabilitation. Patients generally make significant functional gains in the first 6 weeks to 3 months and continue to experience improvements for 6-12+ months following joint replacement.

- During the entire time you are taking narcotic medication you should not drive, drink alcohol or be responsible for tasks that require judgment, coordination, insight, or short term memory, i.e. operating heavy power machinery, childcare, legal/financial decisionmaking.
- You will see the surgeon for your **first postoperative appointment 1.5-2 weeks following surgery.** Fremont Orthopaedics will schedule your followup appointment prior to your surgery.
- **Physical therapy** is typically prescribed following joint replacement. The frequency and duration may vary among patients, but in general, you should expect to begin home PT within 1-2 weeks following surgery and to attend therapy sessions 1-2 times a week for at least 2-3 months. For some patients, PT will be helpful for several months.
- **Attendance at therapy sessions and participation in your home rehabilitation program is key to a successful recovery!** Your therapist will provide you with instructions.

## Questions or Concerns:

Should you develop any new health issues prior to your surgery or if you have further questions or concerns, please call Fremont Orthopaedics at (307)332-9720.

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