

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS AFTER TOTAL HIP SURGERY

Since care of your new total hip will continue even after discharge from the hospital, the following information will prove helpful when you go home.

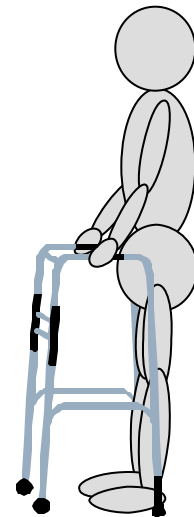
What to Expect

After surgery, some discomfort is normal. Your physician will prescribe pain medication for you, or tell you which over-the-counter medications you can take. Taking pain medication will help you be more comfortable, making it easier to move, walk, deep breath, and to rest. Take these medications with food to avoid upset stomach. You should gradually use less pain medication as you recover.

Activity:

Gentle exercise and walking are very important in your recovery. However, it is extremely important to maintain Total Hip Precautions. These are:

- Do not bend at the waist or lift your leg greater than 90 degrees.
- Do not cross your legs while sitting or lying in bed.
- Always keep the foot on the operated side aimed outward. Do not point toes inward.
- When sitting, choose a firm chair with arms, avoid low or soft chairs. Keep knees apart, do not bend forward. Do not sit for longer than 45 minutes at a time.
- When sleeping, keep your abduction bolster or 2 pillows between your legs. Do not sleep on your operated side. If sleeping on your non-operated side, keep pillows between your legs.
- Continue to use your walker or crutches while standing or walking. You may bear weight as tolerated. Remove all small rugs around the house as they are easy to trip on.
- Remember, when going up stairs, lead with your non-operated leg and when going down stairs, lead with the operated leg and use your walker/crutches.



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Maintain your exercise regime that you have been taught by the physical therapist. Don't be shy – ask for help when you need it. Your goal is to be able to do things for yourself, but right now you need to take care of your new hip until it fully heals. Do not risk hurting yourself by trying to do too much, too soon.

Care of the Incision:

Some swelling and bruising at the site of the surgical incision are to be expected. These changes usually go away within two to four weeks after the operation.

Sponge baths may be necessary for the first few days. Ask your doctor when you may take a shower or a tub bath. Don't scrub your incision; let the water run over it and then pat it dry. Remember to observe total hip precautions when getting out of the shower or tub.

You will probably have tape strips called “steri strips” covering your incision on the outside. Leave them in place, and they will come off naturally in about a week.

Some people have stitches or staples instead of steri strips. Stitches or staples are usually removed 10 to 14 days after surgery in your surgeon's office. The incision should be kept dry for 24 hours after the staples or stitches are removed. Then you can shower as per physician instructions.

Do not take tub baths, swim or soak in a hot tub or jacuzzi until your incision is completely healed (at least two weeks.) Refer to your physician's instructions.

Nutrition:

- Eat a balanced diet with lots of protein, fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Drink fluids, at least 6-8 glasses of water a day.
- If possible, increase the amount of fiber in your diet as constipation occurs frequently when activity is limited and pain medication is taken.
- If constipation persists, a stool softener or a gentle laxative may be necessary.

Driving:

- Please ask your doctor for specific instructions regarding driving after surgery.
- Always wear your seatbelt.
- Never drive after taking pain medication.

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Dental Work:

After total joint surgery, you may need to take antibiotics any time when you have dental work done, please contact your doctor. This is to prevent infection of your new total joint. Request prescription for these antibiotics from your doctor or dentist.

When to Call Your Doctor:

- Fever over 101° F.
- Significantly increased pain in hip
- Drainage from incision
- Redness around incision
- Increased swelling around incision
- Chest pain
- Problems with breathing
- Calf pain or swelling in your legs

Keep your checkup appointment with your doctor. It is important to monitor the healing and function of your new hip.

Your new hip may set off metal detectors such as those found in airports and some buildings