

Discharge Instructions for Total Hip Replacement

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Thank you for entrusting your care to us. We would like to make your healing process as rapid as possible. Below are some instructions for frequently encountered question.

1. Plan to return six weeks after your joint replacement for clinic follow-up. Appointments can be scheduled at 410-337-7900.
2. You should leave the water-resistant dressing in place for 4 days and then place a dry dressing on the hip incision once or twice a day. The drainage from the hip should be decreasing. If it is not decreasing, let us know. Do not put any creams on the incision for six weeks after the surgery.
3. Most patients have a special glue strip on the hip with no stitches outside the skin. Leave this glue strip on for at least two weeks and then you can peel it off in the shower.
4. Use some form of support (walker, crutches, cane) for the first 4-6 weeks after a hip replacement, even if you do not think you need it. This will protect you from falls and allow the bone to grow into the hip replacement parts.
5. Put a pillow in between your legs when sleeping on your side for the first 6 weeks. In general, it is better to sleep on the side that you did *not* have operated on.
6. You may shower starting four days after the surgery. The incision can get wet, but should be patted dry at the end of the shower. Do not soak the incision in a bathtub, hot tub, lake, or pool for six weeks after surgery. Showers only until this time. A shower chair can help dramatically with your comfort while taking a shower.
7. In general, you should not drive for two weeks after a joint replacement and you should never drive while on narcotic medications.
8. Try to take the narcotic medications as sparingly as is possible, before going to bed and before physical therapy are two common times when patients feel they have more pain and should take the narcotics. Other pain relievers such as ibuprofen and acetaminophen will be almost as effective without the severe side effects.
9. Most patients will take aspirin 81 mg twice a day and wear compression stockings to prevent blood clots. The stomach coated aspirin (Ecotrin or Bufferin) will be easier to take, especially if you take it with food.
10. Try to limit aggressive hip strengthening exercises such as straight leg raises. These are not necessary for your recovery and will tend to irritate your new hip.
11. If you have chest pain or shortness of breath, call 911 to be seen by the EMS service.
12. If you have the following, call our office to be seen in clinic:
 - a. Increasing redness or increasing drainage around the incision
 - b. Increasing pain despite taking pain medication
 - c. Temperature of 101.5 degrees Fahrenheit or above

Although we will give you any necessary contact information in person, you can reach us through the main Towson Orthopaedic Associates' phone number at: 410-337-7900 or Toll-free: 800-678-4671.