

Discharge Instructions

Total Hip Replacement

Patient Information

Here are some helpful hints, instructions, and information that will make your transition to home easier.

Hip Precautions

For the first **3 months** after your hip replacement, it is important that you follow your hip range of motion precautions. This ensures a decreased risk of dislocation. Your hip replacement is very stable, however your tissues require time to heal and for the joint to become more stable, thereby decreasing the risk of accidental dislocation.

There are two simple rules that you are to follow:

1. When you are sitting in a bed or chair keep your knees apart. When you go to sit or stand, keep your knees apart.
2. If you are already sitting down, do not lean forward to pick anything up off the floor. Use your pick up stick to fetch items up from the floor or leave them there until someone else can pick them up for you. Have someone else put your shoes on for you and tie your laces.

After 6 weeks you may begin to start walking without the crutches. Try this at home in a safe environment first before commencing this outside. You may start exercising on a stationary bike. Walking outside on flat ground is best, avoid hill climbs and uneven ground for the first 3 months. If you follow these very simple rules, the likelihood that you will dislocate your hip is very low (<1%). At the end of **3 months**, you no longer need to follow these precautions. After **3 months**, you may cross your legs when sitting or lying down. Put on your shoes and tie your laces by going in between your legs.

When you are lying in bed, you are **NOT ALLOWED** to lay on your side for **6 weeks**. After this time it is advised that you place a pillow in-between your legs for up to **3 months** after your surgery to help keep your legs apart.

Pain Medications

On discharge the nursing staff will provide you with all the medication that you will require when you are at home. You have been taking all of these medications during your hospital stay.

Most patients will be given pain medication – Mobic, Endone and Panadol

Mobic – You may or may not have been discharged with this medication. This is an anti-inflammatory medication used primarily to avoid excess bone growth in the muscles after your hip replacement. You will need to take this medication with food once daily.

Endone – This is a fast acting pain medication. Take 6hourly if required. Max 8 tablets/day. As your pain decreases, reduce the amount of endone you take.

Panadol – You should take regular panadol 4 times a day. Max 8 tablets/day. This should be the last pain medication that you stop. Regular panadol can help reduce the amount of endone that you require.

Targin – You may have been prescribed this medication. This is a slow release pain medication. Take 12 hourly/twice a day if required

Most patients experience pain after hip replacement surgery. After the initial surgical insult, most patients report a decrease in the arthritic pain they were experiencing pre-operatively. Once patients are over the surgical pain, only a mild discomfort will remain for 3-6 months.

Pain medications are not your only strategy for controlling the pain. Regular ice therapy will decrease the swelling and the pain. Distraction is also useful in helping you keep your mind off the pain. Television, reading, radio and friendly visits will also help with pain relief.

The pain medications and the decreased mobility after your hip replacement can cause you to become constipated. You should take something to help to avoid this. ie lactulose syrup or coloxyl/senna. Ensure that you drink plenty of water.

Wound Care

Please keep your dressing dry and intact. Your dressings will be taken down at your first post-operative visit. If you develop any redness, weeping or bleeding from your wound please contact Alicia (Practice Nurse) 4727 4111 immediately. Any possible infection must be dealt with early in order to increase the chance of successful treatment.

Swelling

Swelling of the hip and leg are normal after a total hip replacement is normal. There are some things that you can do, however, to minimise this problem.

Ice the hip frequently for the first two to three weeks after surgery. It is particularly helpful to ice after you have done your exercises or been on your feet for a while.

Swelling of the entire leg down to the ankle is normal. This will slowly improve but may last for as long as several months. To help minimise swelling elevate the leg as much as possible while lying down. Perform ankle pumps and wiggle your toes to help reduce the excess fluid in your leg. Avoid prolonged periods of sitting. **DO NOT** sit for hours on end, take short walks often.

Bruising

You may develop bruising of the operative leg, particularly around the hip area. This is normal. Some patients even get bruising and swelling into the knee and ankle regions. Men may even experience bruising and swelling of the scrotum. This is also normal after a hip replacement The bruising will gradually disappear and ice may also prove useful in this circumstance.

Blisters

Some patients may develop blisters around the hip incision site. Although they can be alarming in appearance, they pose no significant risk to your hip replacement. They may leak some clear fluid for a period of time but eventually a scab will form and they will heal. If there is any sign of infection (redness of the skin or yellow wound ooze) please contact Alicia (Practice Nurse) immediately 4727 4111.

DVT Prophylaxis/TED stockings

You will go home on Xarelto (Rivaroxaban) 10mg daily (pink tablet). This tablet is used to reduce the risk of developing a clot (DVT). You must take this for 25 days. Once you have completed this, commence aspirin 100mg (either cartia or astrix). You can buy this from your local chemist. You must wear the TED stockings for a period of **6 weeks** following your hip replacement. You will have been given two pairs of these stockings from the hospital. You may remove them twice daily for one hour each. You must wear them at night. Once you have reached the **6 week** anniversary from your hip replacement you may cease the aspirin (unless it is a regular medication) and remove your TED stockings.

Weight Bearing, Walkers, Crutches, and Canes

You may place as much weight onto the operated leg as your pain and comfort allow. You will not be damaging your hip replacement by placing your weight on the leg. As you begin to put more weight on the leg, you may progress off of your walking aids as tolerated. We recommend that you continue the use of one crutch or cane until **6 weeks** after your surgery. If you have been instructed not to fully weight bear on your leg, please follow these instructions.

Remember that common sense and safety are most important, we do not wish for you to have a fall and risk dislocating your new hip replacement.

Driving an automobile

You are **NOT ALLOWED** to drive for the first **6 weeks**. You will be advised at your **6 week** post operative appointment when you can commence driving again.

Sleeping and Eating Difficulties

Some patients have difficulty sleeping for a few months after a hip replacement. It will improve with time but it is a difficult problem to treat. Mostly patients find it hard to sleep because of uncontrolled pain. Control the pain and your normal sleep patterns will return. During the day ensure you do not regularly fall asleep, be active mentally and physically. During the day you have many distractions. At night time if you find you are experiencing pain, take your pain relief medication, get out of bed, watch some television until the pain is under control. Then try to lay down again and go to sleep. Sleeping pills will only be given to those patients who regularly take them.

Some patients may lose their appetite after a hip replacement. This is common and it will improve with time. Until it improves, try to eat several small meals a day rather than trying to force down large meals. Other alternatives such as sustagen from the chemist or supermarket will help increase your appetite and provide a protein rich diet that is essential for healing. In regards to dental work, patients must **ALWAYS** have antibiotic cover prior to dental treatment that involves breach of the gum line. Your dentist will be able to give you an antibiotic script prior to any dental treatment.

Your follow-up appointment will be between 10 and 14 days after your surgery.

If you have any questions, concerns or problems about your recovery after your hip replacement, please feel free to contact *Alicia (Practice Nurse)* on 4727 4111 or email on alicia@tsvllc.com.au