

Understanding Joint Replacement - What to Expect During Recovery



Ascension

Recovery

Understanding pain and managing constipation & nausea

- Understanding pain
 - Pain during recovery is expected
 - It will lessen as your recovery advances
 - Your nurse will review ways to manage your pain (utilizing icing, elevating, frequent walking, medication)
- Manage constipation per your doctor's instructions regarding:
 - Hydration
 - Stool softener/laxative
 - Fruit/juice
 - Warm beverages
- Managing nausea
 - Talk to your nurse if you experience nausea

Preventing complications

- Caring for your incision and dressing
 - Shower only
 - Do not immerse incision in water until your incision is healed with no scabbing
 - Follow instructions for bandage removal
 - Notify your doctor if you suspect infection or a blood clot

Blood clots

- To help prevent blood clots:
 - Take blood thinners, as directed
 - Use compression stockings
 - Perform ankle pump exercises three times daily to maintain good circulation
 - Walk
 - Control swelling by using stockings
 - Know the signs of blood clots or pulmonary embolism

Pneumonia

- To help prevent pneumonia:
 - Use spirometer as directed by doctor
 - Walk as directed

Pulmonary embolism

- Call 911 if you have any of the following symptoms:
 - Sudden chest pain
 - Difficult breathing
 - Shortness of breath
 - Sweating or confusion

Weeks one and two

- Per your doctor's instructions:
 - Continue outpatient or home therapy
 - Use walker
 - Take short walks
 - Engage in approved home activities
 - Exercise as directed

Weeks two to four

- You and your physical therapist will advance your progress accordingly for the following:
 - Use of a cane
 - Walking without a cane
 - Climbing stairs
 - Driving
 - Driving is predicted largely by how many narcotic pain medications you'll need to control your pain, and the return of your reflexes
 - Your doctor will assist in this decision at your two week post-operative appointment

Regular exercise program

- When you resume your exercise program:
 - Do low impact and low risk exercises as directed
 - Avoid high impact exercises
 - Do regular exercises per your doctor's approval

Recovery is a process

- Physical therapy entails:
 - 9 exercises for hip
 - 10 exercises for knee
 - See *Understanding Joint Replacement - Pre & Post-Operative Exercises* document
- Additional exercises include:
 - Low impact and low risk exercises
- See *Understanding Joint Replacement - How To's* document
- Follow-up with your doctor
- Be patient but persistent