

Frequently Asked Questions: After Total Hip / Knee Replacement

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After Hours: (425) 462-9800, press “1”

1. When should I follow up after my joint replacement?

- You should follow up with your doctor approximately two weeks, six weeks, twelve weeks, a year, and then yearly after your surgery. The two week appointments should have been made at the time you scheduled your surgery. If you are not sure about this date, or if this appointment was not made, please call our office: 425-462-9800.

2. How long am I going to be on Coumadin?

- In general, you will be on Coumadin (Warfarin) for four weeks from your date of surgery if you had a knee replacement and six weeks from your date of surgery if you had a hip replacement. This may change based on your specific medical condition.

3. Who will direct my Coumadin dosing?

- If you return home after surgery, your Coumadin levels (PT/INR) will be drawn by the home health nurse. These levels will be reported to the Overlake Anticoagulation Clinic (ACC), who will direct your Coumadin dosing. **If you have questions or concerns for the Anticoagulation Clinic, please call: 425-688-5846, for appointments call: 425-688-5700.**
- If you are discharged to a nursing facility after surgery, your Coumadin dosing will typically be overseen by a doctor at that facility. When you return home, your dosing will need to be directed by the Overlake Anticoagulation Clinic (ACC). The nursing facility typically communicates with the ACC, but not always. **A referral has been initiated for you at the ACC, please call to schedule your first appointment for further dosing of your Coumadin medication: 425-688-5700.**

4. How often do I need my Coumadin (PT/INR) levels drawn?

- Twice a week until your therapy is complete.

5. How often does home health come to the house?

- A nurse should visit two times a week for the first two weeks.
- A therapist should visit three times a week for the first two weeks.

6. What do I do after home health has discharged me?

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- At your first post-operative appointment two weeks after surgery, you will be given a prescription for outpatient physical therapy that you may take to any outpatient physical therapy location that is convenient for you. This should be started right away. It may be helpful to schedule this in advance to ensure availability of your first choice. We recommend consideration of physical therapy at Bellevue Bone and Joint Physicians, as our therapists work closely with your doctor.
- You will need to be followed at the Overlake Anticoagulation Clinic (ACC) for monitoring of your Coumadin therapy. The home health company should help with this transition. **A referral has been initiated for you at the ACC, please call to schedule your first appointment for further dosing of your Coumadin medication: 425-688-5700. The ACC has a location in Bellevue and a location in Issaquah. If you have other questions or concerns for the Anticoagulation Clinic, please call: 425-688-5846.**

7. What are the signs of infection I should look for?

- It is very common for the knee, and even the hip, to be red and warm after surgery. Most of the time this is completely normal.
- Our suspicion for infection rises with any of the following:
 - i. There is purulent (pus-like) discharge from the incision.
 - ii. Your temperature is over 101.5 degrees for a prolonged period of time – 12 hours or longer.
 - iii. It becomes much more painful to move the knee or hip through a gentle range of motion for a prolonged period of time – 12 hours or longer.
- **IF ANY OF THESE THREE OCCUR, PLEASE CONTACT OUR OFFICE. For after-hours calls, dial “1” when you hear the recorded message. This will allow you to have the on-call physician paged.**

8. When will my staples be removed?

- Staples will be removed at your two week appointment.

9. When can I drive?

- You can drive when you are off all narcotic pain medications (these may include: Norco, Vicodin, Percocet, Oxycodone, Oxycontin, Dilaudid, or Morphine). **AND...**
- When you are capable of pushing on the gas and brake quickly and forcefully if needed. This will take longer if your surgery was on the right side: figure at least 3-4 weeks.

10. When can I shower?

- We recommend that you refrain from showering until you are seen at your first post-operative appointment. This protects the wound while it is healing.
- You may shower the day after your staples are removed in the office provided the wound is healing nicely.

11. When can I go in a hot tub / bath / pool / lake?

- 4-6 weeks from surgery when your incision has COMPLETELY healed (no remaining scabs or open areas).

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- You should not submerge the wound until the skin is completely healed.

12. How do I get a refill on my pain medications before my next appointment?

- Please call BBJP with your refill request. Many narcotic pain medications require a hand written prescription and cannot be faxed or called in to a pharmacy.
- Please understand that refill requests will be taken care of as quickly as possible (within 24-48 hours), but WILL NOT be handled by an on-call physician.
- Please plan accordingly. If you need a refill before the weekend, let our office know by Wednesday of that week.

13. How do I get a handicap placard?

- We are happy to provide you with ONE temporary six month handicap placard at the time of your surgery. Please ask if you feel you will need this. If you believe you need a handicap placard for longer than six months from surgery, please contact your primary care physician.

14. What should I do about the leg swelling I am experiencing after surgery?

- **It is very common (almost universal) to see swelling in the leg after surgery, especially knee surgery.** Please ice / elevate four times per day for thirty minutes at a minimum. This can make a significant difference in the amount of swelling you experience. When elevating, please make sure the surgical leg is higher than the heart (your chest). A good way to do this is to lay completely flat and put your ankle on the arm rest of your couch with a few pillows underneath the ankle. Please make sure the leg is straight at the knee when elevating; do not put pillows under the knee when you are sleeping or resting. **If you are short of breath, or have new and significant calf pain, please call our office or the on-call physician for further instructions.**

***If you have other questions pertaining to your surgery or musculoskeletal condition, please feel free to contact our office:

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***If you have questions related to your other health conditions (high blood pressure, diabetes, etc...), please contact your primary care physician.

Patient Name: _____

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Right

Left

[] Knee Arthroplasty Outpatient Therapy:

- 3 TIMES A WEEK FOR 6 WEEKS
- DIAGNOSIS: DEGENERATIVE JOINT DISEASE OF THE KNEE STATUS POST KNEE ARTHROPLASTY
- PROGRESSIVE AMBULATION AND GAIT TRAINING. WBAT. RANGE OF MOTION (A/AA/P), ESPECIALLY WORK ON EXTENSION
- PLEASE TELL PATIENT THEIR RANGE OF MOTION AT EACH VISIT
- CALL OUR OFFICE IF RANGE OF MOTION IS < 90 DEGREES AT THREE WEEKS OR < 110 DEGREES AT SIX WEEKS
- QUADRICEPS PRE'S, MODALITIES AS NEEDED
- TEACH HOME PROGRAM (RANGE OF MOTION & QUAD PRE'S)

Right

Left

[] Hip Arthroplasty Outpatient Therapy:

- THREE TIMES A WEEK FOR SIX WEEKS
- DIAGNOSIS: DEGENERATIVE JOINT DISEASE OF THE HIP, STATUS POST CEMENTLESS TOTAL HIP ARTHROPLAST
- PROGRESSIVE AMBULATION AND GAIT TRAINING. WBAT
- ABDUCTION AND EXTENSION PRE'S
- ABDUCTOR STRENGTHENING AND STRETCHING
- TEACH HOME PROGRAM FOR ABDUCTOR STRENGTHENING AND STRETCHING
- REVIEW POSTERIOR HIP PRECAUTIONS, CONTINUE FOR SIX WEEKS, MODALITIES AS NEEDED

Date _____