



UNC  
ORTHOPAEDICS

# Prepare for and Recover from Total Hip or Knee Replacement Surgery

Patient Name \_\_\_\_\_

Surgeon Name \_\_\_\_\_

Surgery Date \_\_\_\_\_



# Welcome

Preparing for surgery can be overwhelming. Everyone is different. Your care team will create a recovery program just for you.

This booklet is based on research that helps everyone recover better and faster after surgery. For example, walking and moving soon after surgery is important. So, if you had surgery before, some information may be new or different.

**There are planners and checklists to help you and your family.**

## **SECTION 1 - GET READY FOR SURGERY**

Begin planning after you've obtained clearance for surgery.

## **SECTION 2 - PRE-OP APPOINTMENT**

Review ahead of time so that your joint replacement team may address any remaining questions. Find out what to expect at the hospital.

## **SECTION 3 - AFTER SURGERY**

This guide will help you better plan for your recovery in the hospital and at home after discharge.



### **Read this booklet as soon as you can.**

- Bring it to your appointments and to the hospital.
- Write down any questions to ask your surgical team when you see them.

We want you, your family, and friends to understand what to expect so everyone can help you recover. For any additional information to booklet please see the following website:

1. <https://orthoinfo.org>
2. <https://hipknee.aahks.org>

*Your Joint Replacement Team*

**UNC ORTHOPAEDICS**

Office Phone 919-966-3340

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# SECTION 1 - GET READY FOR SURGERY

Begin planning after you've obtained clearance for surgery. (pages 3-11)

## FIRST CHECKLIST FOR BEFORE SURGERY

### One Month Before Surgery:

- If you are employed and plan to use Short Term Disability, please speak to your employer so they can forward the necessary forms to our office for completion.
- Choose who speaks for you if you cannot speak for yourself. Talk with them about your wishes and create an advance directive.
- Meet with your healthcare team to review your medical history. If you take any immunosuppressant medication, please make sure to notify your surgeon.
- Get a dental checkup.
- Eat healthy. Protein (chicken, eggs, fish) can help your body heal.
- If you're overweight, losing ANY weight will take stress off your joint.
- If you smoke, vape, or chew tobacco, work with your doctor to quit in the weeks before surgery. Nicotine levels are checked at pre-op visit and surgery will be postponed even if test positive due to nicotine gum or patches.

### 2 Weeks Before Surgery, Find Out:

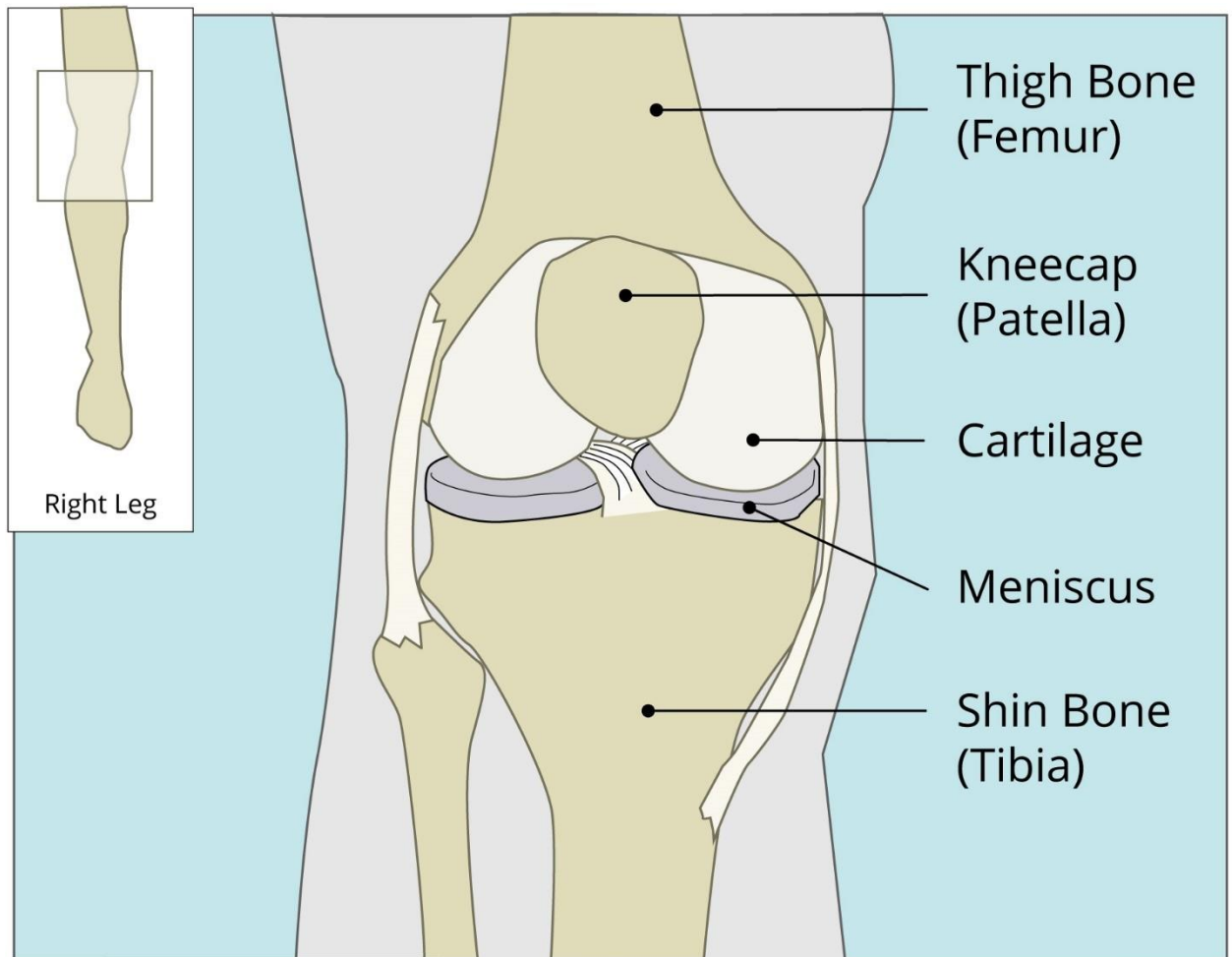
- The arrival time for surgery is controlled by UNC Hillsborough Hospital. The hospital will call a day ahead to provide you the time to arrive.
- How long you should expect to be in the hospital.
- If you need to stop any medications the day of surgery. If you routinely take a blood thinner, make sure you are aware of when to stop anticoagulant medications.
- How many hours before surgery you need to stop eating and drinking.
- If you should have any kind of juice or sport drink in the hours before surgery.
- If you'll need to pay any kind of copay or fee when you arrive at the hospital.

## Your Knee Joint

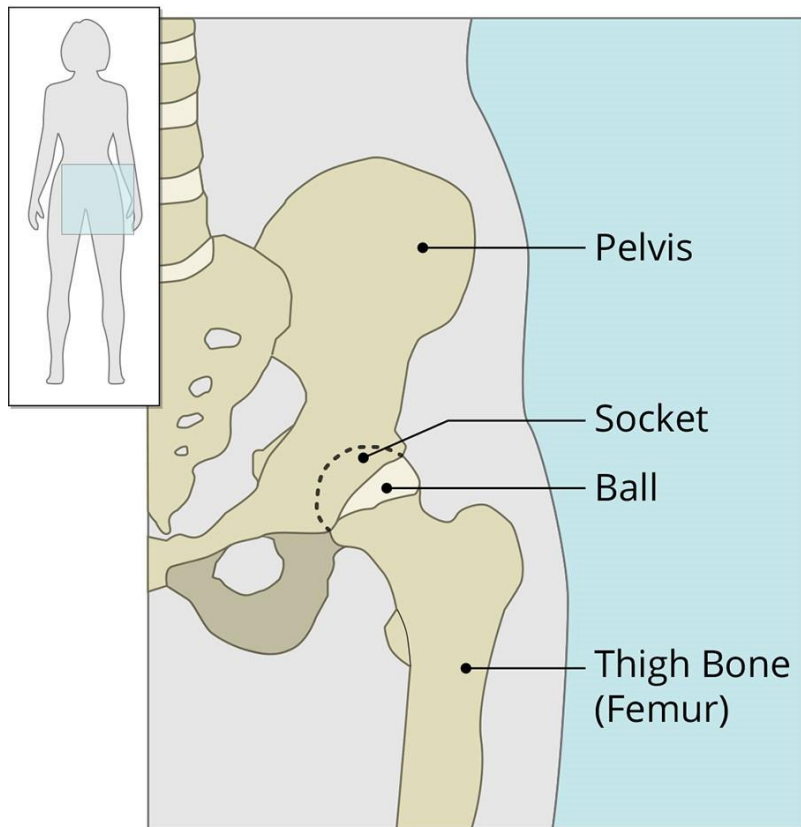
Your knee is made up of 3 bones.

- On top is your **thigh bone**: the **femur** [FEE-mer].
- On the bottom is your **shin bone**: the **tibia** [TIB-ee-uh].
- In the middle, is your **kneecap**: the **patella** [puh-TEL-uh].

Between the bones you have a shock absorber, called: the **meniscus** [mi-NIS-kuhs]. The ends of the bones are covered in a smooth material called: **cartilage** [KAHR-til-ij].



## Your Hip Joint

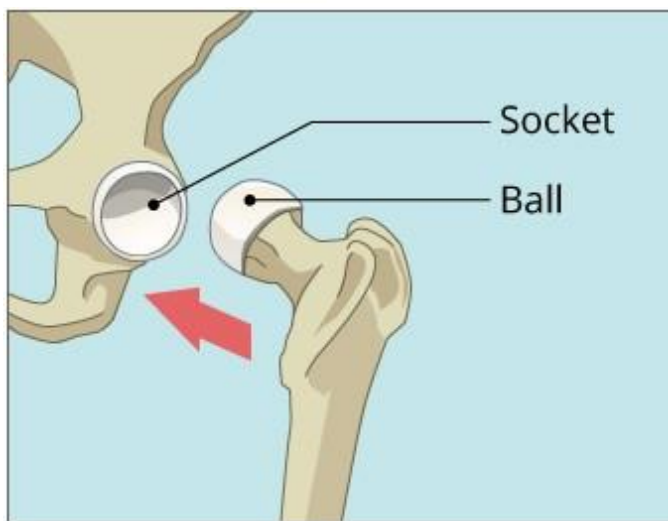


The hip joint is where 2 bones meet.

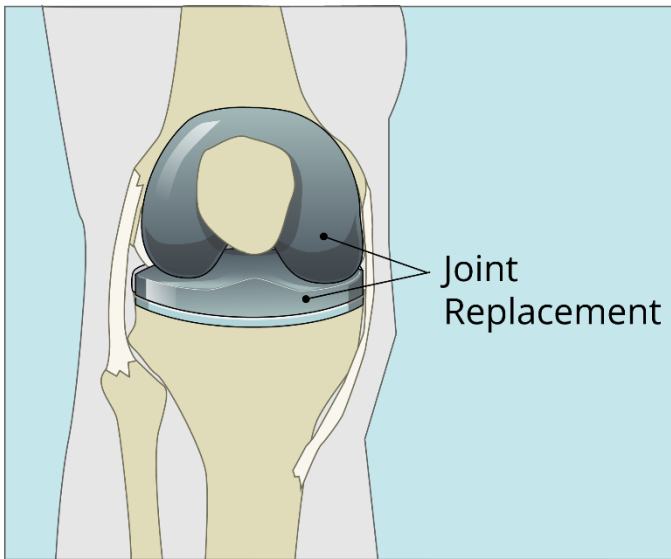
On top is a large bone called the **pelvis** [PEL-vis].

On the bottom is your **thigh bone**: the **femur**. The top of the thigh bone looks like a **ball**. This ball fits into a round, cup-shaped area in the pelvis called the **socket**.

The ends of these bones are covered with a smooth material called **cartilage**. This ball-and-socket joint allows your hip to move and bend.



## When is a hip or knee joint replaced?



Over time, aging, high-impact activities and sports, and extra weight can put stress on the knee or hip.

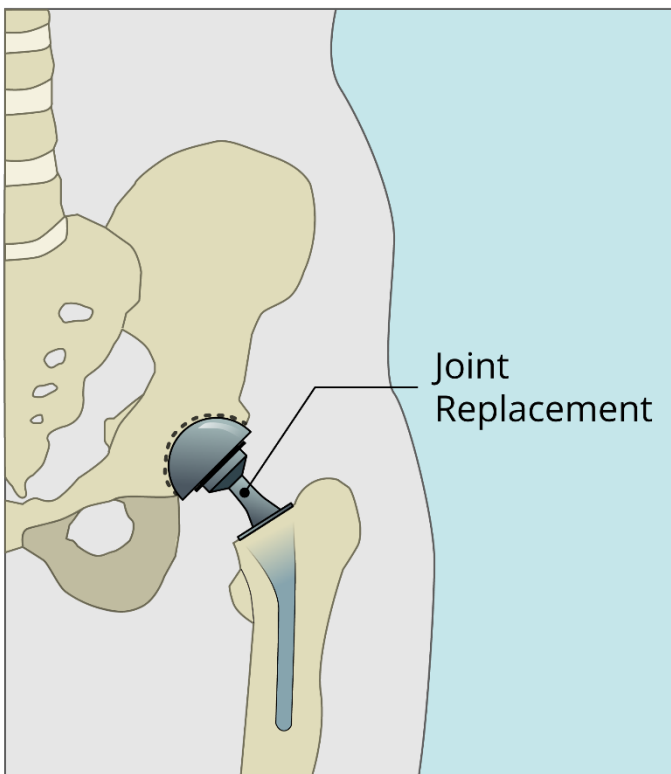
The smooth cartilage on the ends of the bones can become thin and worn out. And one bone can rub on another bone. In the knee, that shock absorber (the meniscus) can also tear. All these things cause pain and stiffness.

You may be told you have **osteoarthritis**

[os-tee-oh-ahr-THRAHY-tis].

This is also called **OA** or “wear-and-tear arthritis.”

Your bones also need blood to stay healthy. And taking a lot of steroids, drinking a lot of alcohol, or other diseases can also affect blood flow to the bones.



## Get Ready for Surgery

Your Surgery Team: Your surgeon will oversee your care. Your team may also include nurses, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, and doctors in training.

One Month Before Surgery - begin checklist on page 3



Please be sure your surgeon is aware of any immunosuppressant medication and that there is a plan in place to hold prior to surgery.

## Get a Dental Checkup



Before surgery, get a dental checkup. It may seem strange, but cavities or problems with your gums can lead to an infection in your new hip or knee. Infections are serious, so get any dental work done **before** surgery.



After surgery, do **NOT** have any dental work done (including a teeth cleaning). And do **NOT** have any kind of surgery or medical procedures for 3 months.

Bacteria can travel through a cut in your mouth or your body to your new hip or knee implant. So, any kind of procedure could lead to an infection in the months after surgery.

To be safe, it's also a good idea to avoid anything like manicures, pedicures, or tattoos. If needles or tools have bacteria on them, this could also lead to an infection.

- Call your surgeon's office the week before dentist appointments, if your dentist does not supply the antibiotic.
- Please be sure to give your dental provider a copy of the Antibiotic Prophylaxis **Dental Protocol** available on UNC Orthopaedic website.

<https://www.med.unc.edu/ortho/services/joints/patient-materials/>

## Losing Weight



If you are overweight, losing **any** weight (even a few pounds) will help you recover better. For example, **losing 1 pound can take 3 to 6 pounds of pressure off of your knees!** This takes stress off your new joint and helps it last longer.

If hip or knee pain is the main thing that's kept you from being active, after surgery it should be easier to be active and lose weight as well.

## Friends to Help at the Hospital and at Home



Choose one friend or family member who can be part of your team. They can help you make decisions and manage your care before, during, and after surgery.

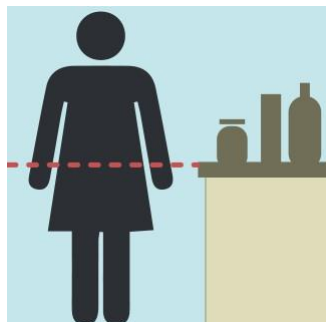
If you take care of anyone (like children or an older parent), you'll need help caring for them. If you don't have people nearby who can help you in the first week at home, talk with your team.

### The first 3 days at home

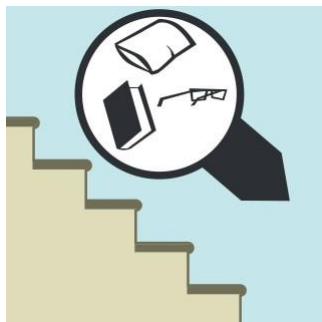
It's a good idea to have someone stay with you to help with things like meals and to make sure you don't fall. This is helpful to have, but not an absolute requirement to surgery.

## Set Up Your Home

Before you go to the hospital, set up your home to make life easier when you come back. For example, clean your home. This way it will be easier to get around when you come home.



Put anything you use often at waist and shoulder height so they're easy to reach. Remember to do this in the kitchen and the bathroom!



Bring anything you need during the day downstairs. If you usually sleep upstairs, if possible put a bed on the main floor.



Buy food that's easy to make and get other supplies. It may be hard to shop when you first get home.



## Set Up Your Home (Continued)



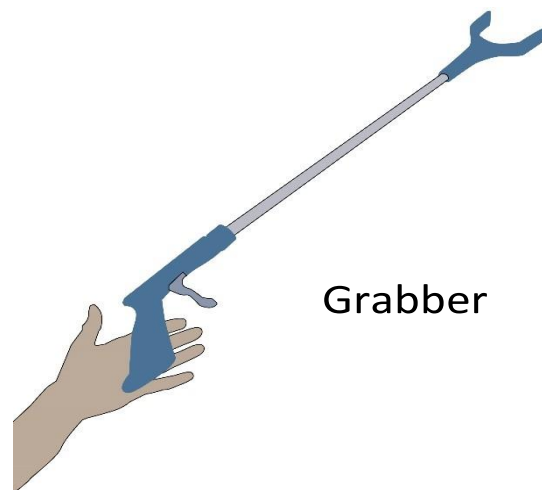
The bedside commode (BSC) is a seat for your toilet to raise the height and makes it easier to sit and get back up.

Commode

- Put nightlights in the bathroom and hallways so you don't fall.
- Avoid any low chairs.
- Move any throw rugs so you don't trip on them. Move furniture out of the way so there's enough room to move with a walker.
- Use a bag or basket to carry things from place to place as you move around with a walker.
- If you already have a walker, then plan to bring to hospital. If you do not own equipment, this will be arranged for you in the hospital.

### OPTIONAL ITEMS AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE: (not covered by insurance)

- A "grabber" (reacher) with a long handle can help you reach or pick things up without bending over.
- A sponge with a long handle is helpful in the shower.
- Some people have grab-bars and a handheld shower hose put in the bathroom.



Grabber

## Get Strong for Surgery



### **Eat healthy in the weeks before surgery.**

Find out what's best for you. Protein can help your body heal. It's often good to eat things like eggs or chicken.



**Start physical therapy.** You may be able to have a physical therapist show you exercises to do before and after surgery. If this is available, it can help you get strong and improves blood flow, which helps you heal better and faster.



### **STOP using tobacco or nicotine.**

Smoking, vaping (e-cigarettes), or chewing tobacco can cause serious problems with healing.

Your surgery site needs a good blood supply to heal well. Nicotine limits blood flow and makes it hard for your body to heal after surgery. Studies show that people who use nicotine in the weeks before surgery are more likely to have problems with their heart, lungs, or surgical wounds during or after surgery. And they need to stay in the hospital longer.

Your doctor may tell you to stop using any kind of tobacco or nicotine at least 4 to 6 weeks before surgery.

Others should NOT smoke around you in the weeks before surgery.

A blood test may be done in the weeks before surgery to measure the nicotine in your blood. This is to make sure it's safe to operate. If you test positive, your surgery will be postponed.



Talk to your primary care physician about ways to stop using nicotine.



## Who Speaks for You?

Most of the time, surgery goes fine. But everyone should make sure their doctor and family know their wishes. If a decision needs to be made about your care during surgery or if you cannot speak for yourself after surgery, your team needs to know who speaks for you.

Make sure this person knows what treatments (like CPR) you would or would NOT want if there was a serious problem. It's best to create an **advance directive** (living will) to document what you would or would not like done to keep you alive. It's a good idea for everyone to have this and to talk with their family about it. You can change it any time.

- If you have an advance directive, bring a copy to the hospital.
- If you don't have one, you can make one online.

### TIP

[https://www.sosnc.gov/divisions/advance\\_healthcare\\_directives](https://www.sosnc.gov/divisions/advance_healthcare_directives)

The above link is for residents of North Carolina.

### TIP

If you are still working and wish to apply for Short Term Disability, you should notify your Manager or Human Resource Department once you know your date for surgery. Your specific job duties play a large role in when you can return to work. After surgery you may require physical therapy for up to 12 weeks and there may be activity restrictions during this time as well. Please think about how much time you will need out of work given the physical requirements of your job. The maximum leave time endorsed is 12 weeks though in some cases it is possible to return much sooner. Be aware that all forms will take up to 5-10 business days to complete once received in office.

Our office fax number is 919-966-6730 or can scan to e-mail: [totaljoint@med.unc.edu](mailto:totaljoint@med.unc.edu) and include your goals for return to work following surgery. Your input is required to know better how much time will best benefit your recovery.

## SECTION 2 - PRE-OP APPOINTMENT

Review ahead of time so that your joint replacement team may address any remaining questions. Find out what to expect at the hospital. (pages 12-21)

### 2 Weeks Before Surgery

If not done already, plan to attend a Total Joint Replacement Class offered twice a month at UNC-Hillsborough Hospital.

<https://www.med.unc.edu/ortho/services/joints/>

The class schedule is available online through the UNC Orthopaedic Website (link above).



**During your Pre-Op Visit:** Please bring a list of any remaining questions after attending Total Joint Replacement Class.

Let us know if you've **ever had a serious skin infection or history of MRSA**. Some patients will require **bacterial decolonization** prior to surgery. Using the following treatment plan, unless existing allergy to one of the following medications:

- CHLORHEXIDINE SOAP provided: Leave on 2-3 minutes before rinsing, use in daily showers 2 days ahead of surgery and the morning of surgery. No topical applications to skin following showers.
- Mupirocin pre-op intranasal BID for the 5 days prior to surgery.
- Vancomycin and Ancef IV administration peri-operatively.

**Following your Pre-Op Visit:** You will have pre-op lab work either at The Ambulatory Care Center (ACC) or pre-care visit if one was scheduled for you. Please ask which one is required following your pre-op visit. Have medication list available for both pre-op visit and pre-care visits. Pre-care will identify medications you should and should **NOT** take the morning of surgery.

**UNC Hospitals Pre-Care is located at 1218 Raleigh Road (NC 54 E) in Chapel Hill, NC.**



**Find out how long you will stay in the hospital.** It may be 1 to 3 nights. This may sound quick, but we'll make sure you're ready to go home. Ask your surgeon what to expect.



**Important** If you take a blood thinner like warfarin (Coumadin<sup>®</sup>), clopidogrel (Plavix<sup>®</sup>), or rivaroxaban (Xarelto<sup>®</sup>) find out when you should stop taking it in the days or weeks before surgery. These medications can cause too much bleeding during surgery.

## SECOND CHECKLIST FOR BEFORE SURGERY

### A Few Days Before:

- Make sure you have any special soap or washcloths for taking a shower.
- Set up your home to make life easier when you get back:
- Put things where they're easy to reach.
- Move furniture and rugs out of the way to make sure you can get around with a walker.
- Buy food and other supplies.
- Put nightlights in the hallways so you don't fall.
- Know what time to arrive for surgery.

### The Day Before:

Your arrival time will be confirmed by the Surgery Pre-Op staff the day before your surgery (expect call between 10am-2pm). Monday surgeries will be contacted on Friday. If you have not been contacted by 2 pm, call UNC Hillsborough Hospital at [984-215-2436](tel:984-215-2436).

If you will not be staying at home the day before surgery, please provide a reliable phone number where you can be reached.

## What to Bring to the Hospital

- Your insurance card
- A list of any prescription medications
- A list of any over-the-counter medications you take regularly (like aspirin, Tylenol®, and allergy medication like Benadryl®, eye drops)
- Contact information for your primary care doctor
- Walker or adaptive equipment you already own
- Any other important medical information, like allergies to medications, foods, or any kind of metal (like nickel).

## If You Have Sleep Apnea:

Let us know if you have sleep apnea. If you use a CPAP machine (continuous positive airway pressure) at night, bring it with you to use while you're in the hospital.

## THIRD CHECKLIST FOR BEFORE SURGERY

### The Night Before Surgery:

- Shower the night before surgery, follow any directions about using any special soap or antibacterial wipes.
- Pack clean, comfortable clothes, a bathrobe, and any toiletries.
- Pack your photo ID, a list of your medications, your health insurance card and this booklet.
- Pack a copy of your advance directives (living will), if you have one.



#### EATING AND DRINKING

Your stomach needs to be empty for your surgery. If there's **anything** in your stomach, you could throw up during surgery. If you throw up and any of it gets into your lungs, it can be dangerous.

**Nothing to eat after midnight. This includes gum and hard candy.**

**Stop drinking 2 hours before your scheduled arrival time at Hillsborough Hospital for surgery.**

If you had surgery in the past, this may have been longer. Many new studies show it's safe to eat and drink closer to surgery and people recover better. Find out what your doctors want you to do.

### Juice or Sport Drink 2 Hours Before Arrival



Find out if your surgeon wants you to drink something sweet like apple juice or a sport drink **2 hours before arrival**. If you had surgery before, this may surprise you. But research shows this is safe and gives your body extra energy to get through surgery. Must be clear liquid only no dairy and no juice with pulp.

- After you check into the hospital, you **CANNOT** have anything else to drink.

**Important:** If you have diabetes, your doctor may **NOT** want you to drink this, so ask.



## Showering

The night before surgery, you'll need to take a shower. You will be provided special soap to help get rid of bacteria on your skin.

### How to Shower

1. Put clean sheets on your bed.
2. Get in the shower and wash your hair with your regular shampoo. Rinse the shampoo out of your hair.
3. Once your whole body is wet, turn the water OFF. This way you can make sure you clean every part of your body with the special soap or washcloth.
  - Do NOT use the special soap on your face.
  - Do NOT get the soap in your eyes, ears, mouth, or nose.
  - Do NOT use the soap on genitals.
4. Turn the water back on and rinse the soap off after 2-3 minutes.
5. If you have sensitive skin, it may make your skin itch or turn red. If this happens, stop using it and rinse it off right away.
6. Use a clean towel to gently pat your skin dry.
7. Put on fresh, clean clothes.

If you feel itchy or if your skin turns red when you use the special soap, stop using it and rinse your skin off with water right away.



**Do NOT put anything on your body** like lotion, oils, creams, deodorant, or makeup. This can add new germs to your skin.



**Do NOT shave your legs or any of the hair by your groin (bikini area) for 1 week prior to surgery.**

Shaving can cause infections because it creates tiny cuts in the skin. If any hair needs to be removed on or near your hip or knee, your surgeon will remove it with an electric hair clipper on the day of surgery.

## The Morning of Surgery: At Home

### You should shower again.



Shower/bathe using the liquid antibacterial soap and allow lather to remain on skin from your chin to your toes for 2-3 minutes before rinsing. Do not use the liquid antibacterial soap on your face or around your eyes. Wash your hair and face as you normally would. Do not apply anything to your skin (lotions/creams/topical pain medications/deodorant) after showering.



### Medications

Remember to find out what medications you should and should NOT take the morning of surgery.

If your surgical team tells you to take any pills, take them with a small sip of water. Then, **leave your medications at home**. We will give you any medications you need while you're in the hospital.

**Plan to leave all medications at home unless you have been asked to bring a medication that is non-formulary. Rarely is it required to bring home medications and should only bring labelled bottles of medications to the hospital with you. Do NOT take any of these home medications unless administered to you by your nurse.**

If you take a medication that is difficult to obtain, and you believe may meet the criteria of non-formulary please confirm with the UNC-Hillsborough inpatient pharmacy. Generally these are special compound or research medications.

Questions for the pharmacy can be sent to [Erica.Gales@unchealth.unc.edu](mailto:Erica.Gales@unchealth.unc.edu) a minimum of two weeks ahead of your surgery date.



## FOURTH CHECKLIST FOR BEFORE SURGERY

### The Morning of Surgery:

- Pack your CPAP machine if you use one for sleep apnea.
- Take any medications with a sip of water.
- Leave your medications at home.
- Nothing to eat after midnight. This includes gum and hard candy.
- Stop drinking 2 hours before your scheduled arrival time at Hillsborough Hospital for surgery.

### Your Belongings

Only bring what you need to the hospital. Leave your valuables at home or give them to a friend or family member for safekeeping.

We have towels and gowns for you. But you can bring your own **clean and freshly washed** bathrobe and toiletries.



Computers, tablets, and cellphones are allowed.  
And there is Wi-Fi (internet access) in the hospital.

### What to Bring

- Your health insurance cards
- A photo ID, like a driver's license
- A list or photos of your medications, including how much you take and how often you take them
- A way to pay your deductible or copay
- This booklet
- A copy of your advance directive (optional)
- Your CPAP machine, if you use one for sleep apnea

<b>What to Wear</b>	<b>What NOT to Wear</b>
<p>If you wear glasses or use a hearing aid, be sure to wear them.</p>	<p>Do <b>NOT</b> wear any jewelry, including wedding rings, earrings, or body piercings.</p>
<p>Wear loose, comfortable clothes, like sweatpants.</p>	<p>Do <b>NOT</b> bring flip-flops or slippers. It's better to have a shoe with a back that's more secure, so you don't fall.</p>
<p>Bring shoes that have a closed back and closed toe, like sneakers or tennis shoes.</p>	

### The Day of Surgery: At the Hospital

The front doors open at 5:30 am and we'll check you in. One member of your family can go with you to the pre-surgery area. Surgery takes 1 to 3 hours. Ask your surgeon what to expect. During surgery, a nurse will update your family.

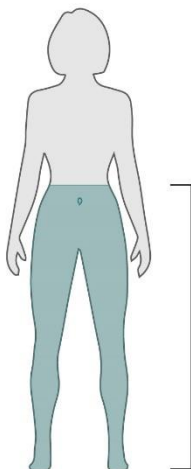


We will do our best to keep things on schedule. Sometimes there are delays and you may have to wait. Bring a book or something to do just in case.

## Controlling Your Pain

A small tube (an IV) will be placed in your arm for fluids and medications.

**You may get general anesthesia.** This puts you to sleep.



This area will be numb

**Or you may get a “spinal block” (epidural).** With a spinal block, a small tube (catheter) is placed in the low back to deliver pain medication right to the nerves that sense pain. With this you won't feel anything from your waist down.

- It's very safe and one of the best ways to help manage pain.
- You can also get pain medication through it after surgery.
- You'll also get medication to help you relax or put you into a light sleep.

With any kind of anesthesia, you probably **won't** remember anything about surgery.

### Medication to Numb the Area

Some numbing medication may also be placed around the joint area.

This can help with pain in the hours after surgery.



### Opioid Pain Medications (Pain Pills)

Opioids [OH-pee-oids] are strong pain medications. You may have heard of drugs like morphine, oxycodone (Oxycontin<sup>®</sup>), Vicodin<sup>®</sup>, Norco<sup>®</sup>, and Dilaudid<sup>®</sup>. This kind of medication is used for severe pain NOT relieved by non-opioid medications.

- It can make people feel sick to their stomach
- It can slow down your recovery
- It can be addictive
- It can make it difficult or painful to have a bowel movement or poop (constipation)

Problems like constipation can be painful and serious.

So, we'll give you other pain medications when possible.



**Let us know if anyone in your family has an addiction.** This way we can make sure we put together the best plan for you.

**IMPORTANT**

We want to manage your pain and prevent the problems some pain medications can cause. Please tell us if you have any concerns about pain medications or pain control.

## In the Recovery Room

Most people are in the recovery room for about 2 hours. Once you're awake, you may get water or juice. Your surgeon or a member of the surgery team will talk with your family.

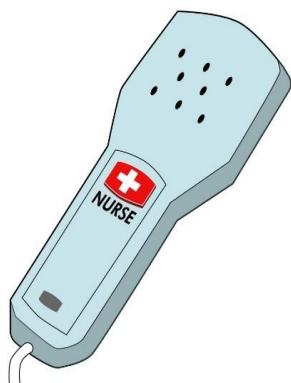
## In the Hospital Room

You'll go to a hospital room where your family can see you. Usually, a family member or friend can stay with you in the room overnight and sleep in a reclining chair.

- You'll still have a small tube (IV) in your arm for fluids.
- To help prevent blood clots, you may have compression sleeves on your legs. These inflate like balloons to keep blood moving.
- A urinary catheter that will be removed 1-2 days after surgery.

### MEDICATIONS YOU'LL GET WHILE YOU'RE IN THE HOSPITAL

- You'll still get many of your regular medications.
- To help prevent blood clots, you'll get aspirin or rarely a more potent blood thinner.
- Some of your regular diabetes, blood pressure, and blood thinner medications may be stopped while you're in the hospital.

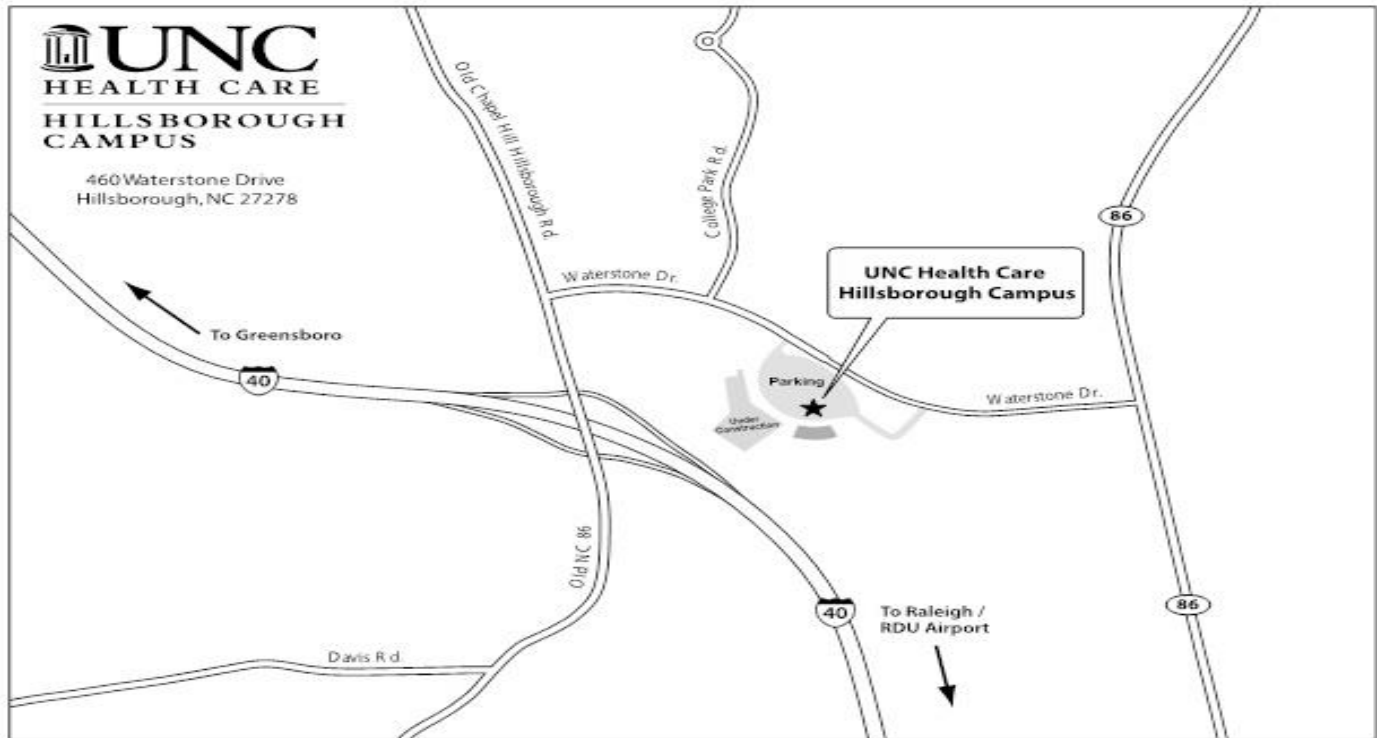


## Call Don't Fall!

- **Do NOT get up on your own at any time during your hospital stay!**
- Always have a staff member with you (a nurse, assistant, or therapist).
- You may be lightheaded and could fall.
- Press the call button to alert staff to help you get up.



Only close friends or family should visit the day of surgery. You'll still be tired and need rest.



430 Waterstone Drive  
 Hillsborough, NC 27278  
 Hospital Operator 984-215-2000

#### **Directions from the West (Greensboro)**

Take I-40 East/ I-85 North towards Burlington/Durham. Follow I-40 East when it splits towards Raleigh. Take Exit 261 for Old NC 86 and turn left onto Old NC 86 North and go under I-40. Take the first right onto Waterstone Drive (at the stop-light). The hospital and parking lot will be on your right.

#### **Directions from the South (Pittsboro)**

Take 15-501 North towards Chapel Hill. Follow 15-501 North to I-40 West. Go left onto I-40. Take I-40 West to Exit 261 for Old NC 86 and Hillsborough. Take a right onto Old NC 86. Turn right at the first stop-light onto Waterstone Drive. The hospital and parking lot will be on your right.

#### **Directions from the East (Raleigh)**

Take I-40 West towards Greensboro. Take Exit 261 for Old NC 86 and Hillsborough. Take a right onto Old NC 86. Turn right at the first stop-light onto Waterstone Drive. The hospital and parking lot will be on your right.

**UNC Hospital General Visiting Hours: 6 a.m. - 9 p.m.** Before **visiting**, children must be screened for a contagious illness by the staff on the patient care unit. Children are restricted from **visiting** all intensive care units, patients on isolation and patients on Protective Precautions unless they have a physician's order.

## SECTION 3 - AFTER SURGERY

This guide will help you better plan for your recovery in the hospital and at home after discharge. (pages 22-36)

### After Surgery

You'll get pain medication. You will have some pain, but talk to your nurses if:

- You're worried about taking pain medication
  - You still have too much pain
- We'll help you get up and walk. Do NOT get up on your own at any time during your hospital stay. Always have a staff member with you.
  - You may start physical therapy the day of surgery.
  - To help prevent blood clots, regularly point and flex your feet and squeeze the muscles in your legs.
  - To help prevent lung infections, we'll show you how to take deep breaths every hour or so.

#### **Before you go home, make sure you have:**

- Prescriptions for any new medications. You can get these filled at the hospital. Ask a nurse.
- Directions for how and when to take any medications.
- NO showers until after your first post-op visit.
- Any home health care scheduled with contact number for follow up.
- An appointment to see your surgeon in about 2-3 weeks and again at 6 weeks.
- Find out when to remove your bandage and have extra dressing supplies sent home depending on your surgeon's preference.

Dr.Olcott asks that you leave the surgical bandage intact until you come back to clinic.

Dr.Del Gaizo wants you to remove the surgical bandage 5 days after surgery and place a new dressing sent home with you from hospital.

There should be **no drainage** after the fifth day.

- Make sure you know when to call.

## Recovery in the Hospital

### Pain Relief After Surgery

To guide your pain relief, we'll regularly ask you about your pain. You'll still have some pain, but we want to make sure your pain isn't severe. You should be able to take deep breaths, cough, move, and walk.

Tell us if the medications help your pain. And let us know if the medications make you feel bad in any way. Talking with your healthcare team will help us manage your pain.



To help manage your pain:

- If you have an epidural, you may get more pain medication through the small tube in your back after surgery.
- You'll get medications like acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or celecoxib (Celebrex®).
- You may get cold packs
- You may get opioid pain medications as needed

#### TIP

Focus on things you enjoy. Listen to music, watch a movie, read a good book, or talk to a friend on the phone. These things can help take your mind off the pain.



## Soon After Surgery:

- About 4 hours after surgery, we'll help you get up and walk.
- Many people start physical therapy the day of surgery.
- We'll help you use the bathroom or a **commode** once the urinary catheter is removed.
- To prevent blood clots, we'll show you how to keep blood moving in your legs. While you're in bed it's good to point and flex your feet and squeeze the muscles in your legs.
- To prevent lung infections (like pneumonia), we'll show you how to take deep breaths every hour or so.

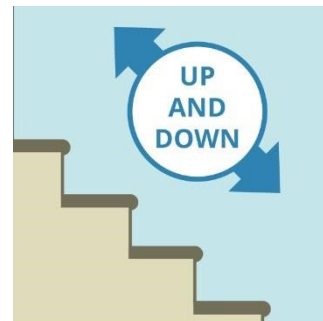


## 1 to 2 Days After Surgery

The case manager (discharge planner) will meet with you to discuss your discharge needs.

### You may be ready to go home if:

- You can walk with a walker.
- You can go home when you meet your PT/OT goals including stairs if required.
- You can urinate (pee).
- You can eat and are **NOT** burping or throwing up.
- Your blood pressure is OK.
- You **DON'T** need IV pain medications to control your pain.
- Your team thinks you're ready.



### You may get home care

If you need it, every few days a physical therapist will visit you at home to help you move your new joint and build up your strength. He or she will also let your doctor know how you're doing. This is called "home health."



## Walking Without a Limp

Before surgery, you probably got used to walking with a limp. This may have caused the muscles in your hip to shorten. With your new joint, even though your legs should be the same length, you may still feel uneven.

As you heal, that feeling should go away. And you should be able to develop a normal walking rhythm without a limp.



It can take a while for the limp to go away. If you still have a limp 3 months after surgery, please let us know.

## You may need to stay in the hospital longer:

### **If you feel sick to your stomach or you're throwing up**

You'll get medication for this. If you still feel sick, try to eat and drink small amounts throughout the day.

### **If some urine stays in your bladder**

If you can't urinate (pee) a tube (called a "catheter") may be placed to help you go. This will be removed once you can urinate (pee) on your own.

### **If a lot of blood collects around the hip or knee joint after surgery**

If this happens, another procedure may be done to treat it.

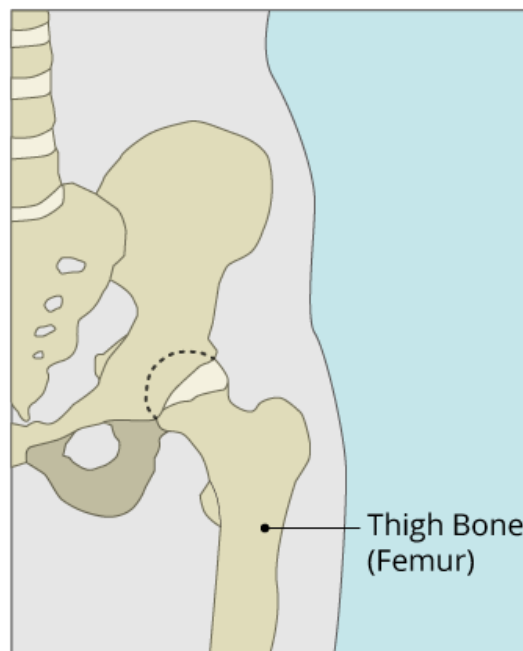
### **If you get an infection**

You'll get medication to help prevent infections. Sometimes people still get an infection after surgery

### If the thigh bone breaks during hip replacement surgery

Sometimes small cracks develop in the bone during surgery. These usually heal on their own. A large break is rare. But if it happens, surgical wire is used to hold the bones in place while they heal.

This is more likely when the bones have become weak from arthritis or bone loss, called “osteoporosis” [os-tee-oh-puh-ROH-sis].



## Leaving the Hospital (Discharge)

### To help you at home, you'll get:



- Information about your surgery and physical therapy exercises
- Directions about how and when to take medications, like blood thinners
- Prescriptions for any medications you need at home

### TIP

Prescriptions can be filled while you are in the hospital. Ask if you would like to do this.

### Follow-Up Appointment

You'll have your first scheduled follow-up appointment approximately 2-3 weeks after surgery. This should be noted on your: After Visit Summary Instructions.

### We'll help you go home as soon as possible, but sometimes there are delays.

- Make sure someone can take you home.
- If you need to go to a rehab center, you may need to wait for an open bed or for insurance to approve it.

# Plan for Recovery at Home

## Urinating

After surgery, sometimes people feel like they still have to urinate (pee). It may feel like some urine is still in their bladder. This usually goes away in a few days. Please call your surgeon if it does NOT go away, or if you have any pain or burning when you urinate. Pain or burning can be signs of infection in your body.

## Taking Care of Your Surgical Wound

Different types of bandages are used. Find out how and when to change your bandage (also called a “dressing”). The bandage should absorb the blood and fluid draining from the surgical wound. If you have any surgical staples, these will be removed in a couple of weeks when you see your surgeon for your follow-up visit.

### Ask your surgical team for instruction about bathing.



- **Do NOT soak in the bathtub, swim, or sit in a hot tub** until your surgeon says it is OK. This is typically discussed at your 6 week post-op visit.
- **NO SHOWERS** until 3 days after your first post-op visit. It is typically 3 days after sutures or staples are removed before showers can be resumed.

## Managing Post-Operative Constipation

Anesthetics and narcotic pain medications both may cause post-operative constipation to varying degrees. Our goal is to prevent constipation and maintain your normal bowel schedule after surgery. Follow these instructions to assist with prevention of constipation:

1. **Drink 8-10 glasses of water a day.**  
Avoid carbonated beverages and caffeinated drinks.
2. **Resume your regular diet** as tolerated. Start with smaller meals.
3. **Eat fresh fruits and vegetables and whole grain, high fiber foods.**
4. **Take stool softener (Colace) and Miralax** as directed in your discharge instructions. Continue these medicines while you are taking narcotic pain medication.
5. **Walk** as much as possible to increase bowel function.
6. **Take your Tylenol and anti-inflammatory on a schedule.**  
**Only take the narcotic pain medicine as needed, NOT on a schedule.**  
If you are not having pain, do not take narcotic pain medication.

If no bowel movements after **2 days**, please try the following medications as directed on their packaging:

1. Dulcolax tablets or Correctol tablets
2. Milk of Magnesia
3. Senekot tablets
4. Mineral oil

If no bowel movement after **4 days**, please try the following medication as directed on the packaging:

1. Glycerine suppository
2. Fleets enema
3. Fleets phosphasoda (liquid)
4. Magnesium Citrate

## Plan for Recovery at Home



### When to call or send a MyChart message:

- If the bandage looks soaked with blood
- If any blood or fluid starts to leak from your bandage
- If the bandage moves and part of the wound is **NOT** covered
- If the skin around your wound has become red and the red area is getting larger
- If any fluid coming from it smells bad or **any drainage after post-op day 5**.
- If you are worried or have a question, please call. Also let us know if any medications make you feel bad or cause any side effects. If we know, we can help.

### Call RIGHT AWAY:

- If you have a fever of **101.5 degrees Fahrenheit or higher**
- If your wound is red or more painful
- If fluid, drainage or pus is coming from your wound
- If you feel sick to your stomach or you're throwing up
- If your pain is worse and the pain medication doesn't control it enough
- If you have pain or unrelieved swelling in your foot, ankle, thigh, or calf (back of your lower leg)
- If it's painful or hard to urinate (pee)
- If you have the chills and you're shivering
- If you have pain in your belly (may be constipation)

**While you take blood thinners, you could bleed or bruise too much if you get a cut or if you fall.**

- Call if you get a cut or something like a nosebleed that doesn't stop bleeding after you put pressure on it.
- Call if a bruise keeps getting bigger. This can be a sign of bleeding under the skin.

**Call early if you think something is wrong. Don't wait!**

**Call 911 or go to the Emergency Room:**



- If you have chest pain
- If you become short of breath or have trouble breathing
- If your hip comes out of the joint and dislocates

**Have the emergency team call us when you are stable.**

# Sleeping

Good sleep will help you heal and gives you the energy you need for physical therapy. Sometimes pain can make it hard to sleep well. And while opioid pain medications can help with pain, they can also cause problems with sleep.

## What CAN help you sleep?

Melatonin 1-4mg by mouth prior to bedtime as needed for sleep.

**Avoid naps during the day.**

**Avoid alcohol.**



- Even though alcohol can make you feel sleepy, you are more likely to wake up and have trouble sleeping.
- **Do NOT drink alcohol while you're still taking pain medication. It's not safe.**

**Avoid caffeine,** it will keep you up.



- Only drink a little coffee, tea or soda during the day.
- Do not drink coffee, tea, or soda at night.

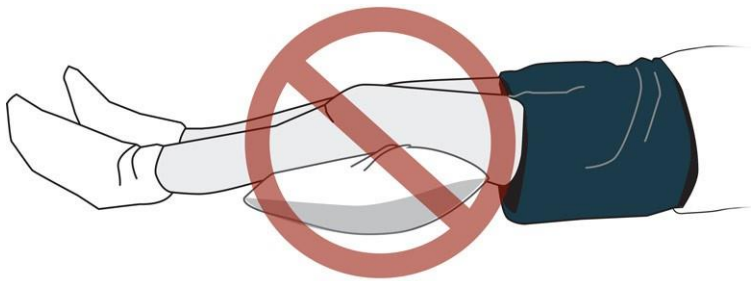
# Knee Replacement

## How to Sleep in the Weeks After Surgery

It's best to sleep on your back with your whole leg up on top of 2 or 3 pillows.

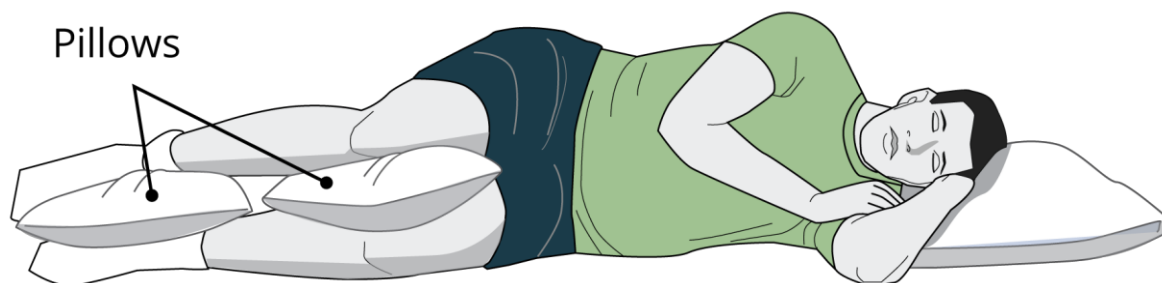
Try **NOT** to sleep with a pillow only under your knee.

It's best if your whole leg is supported with pillows. While just one pillow under the knee feels comfortable, it can make it harder to straighten your leg and heal well.



You can sleep on the side you did **NOT** have surgery on.

It helps to put 2 pillows between your knees, ankles and feet.

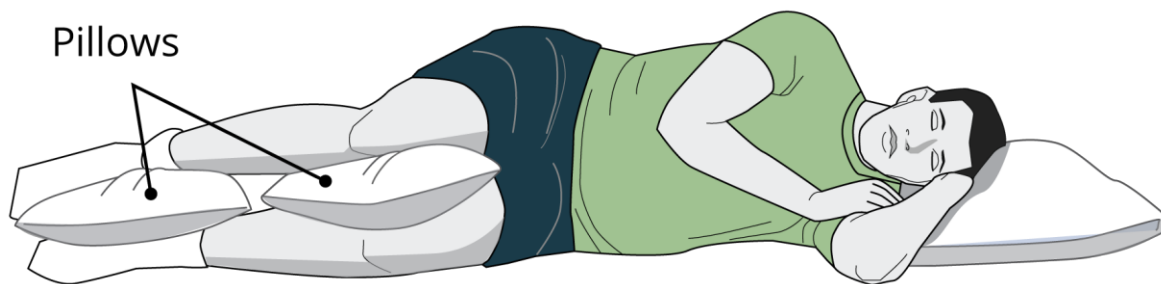


# Hip Replacement

## How to Sleep in the Weeks After Surgery

**It's best to sleep on your back with pillows between your knees.**

You can sleep on the side you did **NOT** have surgery on.  
It helps to put 2 pillows between your knees, ankles and feet.



**Do NOT sleep on your stomach.**

If you sleep on your stomach, your new hip could move out of the place (dislocate). Ask when it's okay for you to sleep on your stomach again.



## Eat Healthy



Your body will heal better and faster if you eat healthy.

**Sometimes people don't feel like eating after surgery.** In the days after surgery some foods may taste different and certain smells may make you feel sick to your stomach. If this happens, eat a lot of small meals throughout the day. Over time, you'll be able to eat more.

## No Smoking or Vaping



Do not smoke, vape (use e-cigarettes), or chew tobacco for at least 4 weeks after surgery. These limit blood flow and make it hard for your body to heal well. They also make it hard to sleep well.

## Walking and Sitting

Walk when you can. You'll be able to walk and do a little more each day as you get stronger. For the first 3 months, sit for short periods of time and walk for short periods of time. Sitting for too long can also make you feel stiff.

### TIP

For the first 3 months, it's best to sit in chairs with arms, so you can lift yourself out of the chair.

## Stairs

You'll be able to go up and down a few stairs right away. And you'll be able to go up and down stairs between floors in about a week. When going up and down stairs:

- Have someone help you.
- Use the handrail on the side you did **NOT** have surgery on.
- Go up or down one step at a time.

### TIP

**If you have pain slow down!**

Pain is your body's way of telling you it's not ready to do something.

## Your Mood



Joint replacement surgery usually gives people more movement and freedom. Keep in mind, your body has been through a lot and it may take a while before you feel like yourself again. You may feel sad or upset. These feelings usually go away as you heal. These feelings could also be related to narcotic pain medication and you should aggressively try to wean off of them.

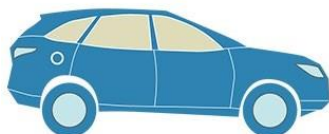
- Call friends and family to talk.
- Invite people over to keep you company and help out.

If you feel very sad, overwhelmed, or helpless, and these feelings do not go away for many days or weeks, please let us know so we can make sure you recover well.



## When can I drive again?

**Do NOT drive until your surgeon says it's OK.**



- Most people can drive an automatic car 4-6 weeks after surgery.
- It may take longer before you can drive a stick shift.

### You can drive an automatic car WHEN:

- **Most of your pain is gone.** You must be able to react quickly with the foot you use to brake and stop.
- **When you no longer have ANY opioid pain medication in your system** (like oxycodone or Dilaudid®).

## When can I go back to work?

Many people go back to work 6 to 12 weeks after surgery.

- If your job involves heavy, physical work, like lifting, talk to your surgeon.
- Ask your employer if there are any rules about when you can return to work.
- If you need a return-to-work form, bring to your follow-up appointment or fax to our office (see phone and fax numbers at the start of this booklet).

## Travel and Security

When going through security at the airport or at a building with a metal detector, let them know you have a hip or knee replacement before you go through it. It's not a problem — and they may just use a wand to scan your hip or knee.

## Sports, Activities, and Hobbies



Walking is usually good along with any physical therapy exercises.

Your body is also using energy to heal. If you feel tired or worn out:

- Take afternoon naps.
- Set small goals and try to do a little more each day.
- **Do NOT run or jog in the weeks after surgery.** Talk with your surgeon about when it may be OK for you to start jogging again.
- Find out when you can do other low-impact activities (like swimming, biking or golfing) in the months after surgery.



**Any high-impact sports or activities where you could fall or get hit are off limits for good (permanently).**

- **Do NOT** play sports where you could get hit or fall, like football, basketball, hockey or soccer.
- **Do NOT** take part in rodeos or martial arts, like karate.



If you start to run low on any of your medications, call your doctor's or surgeon's office a few days before you will run out.

Before a refill prescription for narcotic pain medication can be considered, you must send a message to your surgeon outlining your current regimen. Include use of non-pharmaceutical methods of pain control and current narcotic usage (how many and how often per day). Please use UNC MyChart to provide this information.



## When can I have sex again?

Intimacy is important. And the point of joint replacement is to improve your quality of life.

If you had hip pain **before** surgery, it may have made it hard or painful to have sex. A hip replacement usually makes it possible to have less pain or no pain during sex.

**It's OK to have sex once you feel up to it.**

- About 4 weeks after a knee replacement.
- About 6 to 12 weeks after a hip replacement. You still need to be careful, so your new hip doesn't move out of place (dislocate).



**If you have questions or concerns, ask your surgeon or physical therapist.** It's important to feel safe and get your questions answered.

## No Other Medical Procedures or Dentist Visits for 3 Months AFTER Surgery

In the months after surgery, it's **STILL** important to prevent infections.

**Always remind any doctor, nurse, or dentist that you had a joint replacement before they schedule or do any kind of procedure, even before they clean your teeth. If you ever have signs of an infection in your mouth, your dentist can give you additional antibiotics.**

Following joint replacement surgery we recommend taking one dose of antibiotics 30 minutes prior to any dental appointments or cleanings **lifelong**. Patients should wait at least 6 weeks and preferably 12 weeks after their joint replacement surgery before undergoing any dental cleanings or procedures to decrease the risk for infection.

For patients who are not allergic to penicillin we recommend Amoxicillin 2 grams by mouth once prior to dental cleanings or procedures. For patients who have penicillin allergies we recommend either Clindamycin 600mg or Erythromycin 750mg or Keflex 1000mg by mouth once prior to dental cleanings or procedures. Your dental provider can provide your prescription for antibiotics or it can be done through our office just let us know your preference.

# Notes and Questions

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