



Post-Operative Instructions: Joint Replacement Surgery

These instructions provide general guidelines. Your surgeon will give you specific instructions tailored to your procedure. Always follow your surgeon's advice. Contact your surgeon immediately if you have any concerns.

Pain Management:

Take prescribed pain medication exactly as directed. This often includes a combination of medications that may include over the counter medications such as acetaminophen and opioids.. Do not drive while taking pain medication. Contact your doctor if your pain is not controlled. Consider using ice packs to reduce swelling and discomfort by applying for 20 minutes several times a day.

Incision Care:

Keep your incision clean and dry. Your surgeon will provide specific instructions on showering and bathing. Report any excessive bleeding, drainage, or foul odor.

Elevation:

Elevate the affected joint above your heart whenever possible, especially during the first few days, to reduce swelling. Use pillows to support the limb.

Physical Therapy:

Attend all scheduled physical therapy appointments. Follow your therapist's instructions carefully and practice exercises regularly at home. This is crucial for regaining strength and mobility.

Activity Restrictions:

Avoid activities that put excessive stress on the new joint. This includes:

- Bending too deeply
- Twisting
- Excessive weight-bearing (follow your doctor's specific instructions)
- High impact activities (follow your doctor's specific instructions)
- Heavy lifting (follow your doctor's specific instructions)

Driving:

Do NOT drive until your doctor explicitly clears you. Pain medication and reduced mobility can affect your reaction time.

Weight Bearing:

Follow your surgeon's specific instructions on weight-bearing. This varies depending on the type of surgery and your individual needs. Crutches or a walker may be necessary for a period of time.

Diet:

Maintain a high-fiber diet and hydration to encourage regular bowel movements. Consider using a stool softener or laxative as recommended by your health care provider if you experience constipation.

Signs of Infection: Report to your doctor IMMEDIATELY if you experience:

- Redness, swelling, or warmth around the incision site
- Increased or foul-smelling drainage from the incision
- Fever or chills
- Increased pain

Specific Precautions Based on Joint Replaced:

Hip Replacement: Avoid bending your hip more than 90 degrees. Do not turn your leg inward when sitting or walking. Use a raised toilet seat, and avoid low chairs.

Knee Replacement: Avoid deep knee bends. Do not twist your knee excessively. You'll likely use assistive devices initially, follow specific instructions given. A knee brace might be recommended.

Shoulder Replacement: Avoid lifting heavy objects or reaching overhead. Gently rotate your shoulder within the prescribed range of motion as instructed by your physical therapist.

Important Reminders:

- Keep follow-up appointments with your surgeon.
- Report any concerns or changes in your condition to your doctor or physical therapist immediately.

This information should not replace direct consultation with your medical team. Your surgeon and physical therapist will provide personalized instructions for your recovery. Please do not hesitate to contact them with any questions or concerns.