

When can I drive?

We recommend that you do not drive until you are full weight bearing, able to walk comfortably with or without a cane and are off all prescription pain medications. You must be able to get in and out of your car and move your right foot quickly from the gas to the brake. Most patients are ready to resume driving approximately eight weeks after surgery. If there are any questions as to if you are ready or not, wait until your follow-up visit at eight weeks.

When should I be concerned about the appearance of my wound?

After a total hip replacement, your hip will be slightly warm and swollen for many months. This is normal. Your staples should be ready to be removed approximately three weeks after surgery. There may be some increased redness around the staples as your skin reacts to the foreign material. This also is normal. If this redness increases or the skin surrounding your hip incision becomes redder, swollen, tender, or begins draining, you need to notify your surgeon immediately and come in for an office visit.

How much pain medication do I need?

Every patient is different and will require different amounts of pain medication. In general, it is good to be off all prescription medications two to three weeks after surgery. Often patients are able to use Acetaminophen (Tylenol) throughout the day after their discharge and take stronger prescription pain medication before therapy or at night to help them sleep. You will be given a limited amount of pain medication when you leave the hospital. If you find that your pain is not relieved by your medication, you need to call your surgeon and come in for an office visit.

What if I loose my appetite for longer than a few days after surgery?

Often the stress of surgery and the side effects of medications can cause a loss of appetite. Unfortunately, your nutrition needs are greatly increased immediately after surgery. It is important that you eat enough calories, protein and other nutrients that provide your body the components to heal properly and gain back strength. It may help to have smaller, more frequent meals. If you cannot manage solid foods, try a nutritional supplement such as Ensure High Protein® or Carnation Instant Breakfast. If you are still experiencing problems with your appetite after one week, please call our dietitian to discuss.

What exercise should I do at home?

You will receive therapy in the hospital and the exercises that you learn should be continued at home. Your therapist will also give you a home therapy program before your discharge. It is important to follow your hip precautions. If there are any questions about an activity and whether it is permitted, please contact your surgeon's office.

How long must I follow the hip precautions?

You should follow your hip precaution for 12 weeks after surgery strictly. After 12 weeks, you may begin to do more, but it is always safest to follow the hip precautions as carefully as possible. The precautions are there to help prevent a dislocation of your new hip. After 12 weeks, your tissues have healed enough that you should be able to do a few more activities without increasing your risk of dislocation substantially. No patient with a total hip replacement should ever force or pull their lower extremity into an extreme position or participate in impact sports.

When can I shower?

You may shower after discharge if your wound is dry, without drainage. This is usually four to five days after surgery. Do not scrub your wound. Use anti-bacterial soap and let the water run over your hip. After your staples are removed, we recommend you wait another 48 hours prior to showering. You should not soak your hip (e.g.: in a bathtub, lake, or hot tub) for six weeks after surgery.

When do I need to take antibiotics?

You now have an artificial joint which is at risk for bacterial infection. Anytime you have a bacterial infection, it should be treated immediately with an appropriate antibiotic. Viral illnesses do not require antibiotics.

Antibiotics should be taken before any dental, genitourinary, or gastrointestinal procedures such as: dental cleanings, oral surgery, bladder scopes, urinary catheterizations, colonoscopy, and/or flexible sigmoidoscopy. If there is any question whether you should take an antibiotic or not, it is always safer to do so. But, feel free to call The CORE Institute with any questions. The recommended antibiotic regimen is:

- **two grams of oral Amoxicillin one hour before a procedure**

Penicillin allergic patients may take either two grams of Cephalexin or 600 mg of Clindamycin. A card outlining this will be given to you. Please ask your nurse or surgeon if you have not received this wallet-sized card.

How long do I need to wear my white stockings?

TED hose are compression stockings that we ask you to wear for six weeks after surgery. They help the circulation in your legs and decrease your risk of forming blood clots (deep venous thromboses). You may take them off to shower and at night when you sleep. After six weeks, you are no longer required to wear them.

When will I see my surgeon for follow-up?

Your first follow-up visit will be arranged by your surgeon's surgical scheduler. At three weeks you will see the physician assistant who assisted in your care during your hospital stay for a wound check and staple removal. Your surgeon will be contacted if there are any concerns. At eight weeks postoperatively, you will be seen for radiographs and an exam by your surgeon. If you are doing well, you will then be seen at 16 weeks after your operation with new radiographs by your surgeon or physician assistant. Some patients may require more frequent follow-up and this will be arranged.

When should I call the office?

Please call the office if:

- Your incision becomes more red, swollen or painful
- If there is any drainage from your wound
- If you find therapy more difficult, painful, or your knee becomes stiff
- If you develop lower leg/calf pain, swelling or tenderness
- If you develop a fever greater than 101 degrees
- You have a question or concern not answered above