

A Guide to Help you Move Smoothly from Hospital to Home

Now that you and your doctor have decided to go ahead with your *total joint replacement surgery*, it may be difficult to remember all the necessary details. The following checklist may help you by providing some tips to help prepare for surgery as well plan ahead for your hospital stay.

Pre-Surgery Checklist



No food or water after midnight on the night before surgery.

To reduce the risk of vomiting when you are under anesthesia, do not eat or drink anything after midnight on the night before your surgery, or on the morning of your surgery. This includes water and coffee.

It is extremely important you understand and follow this rule, since breaking it can lead to cancellation of your surgery, or a change in the types of anesthesia available to you.

If you take daily medications, confirm with your doctor which ones you are allowed to take before surgery and those you should stop taking.

If your primary care doctor recommends that you take your regular medicine on the day of your surgery you should take it with only a few sips of water.

Be certain that your healthcare team knows all about all medicines you are taking and any allergies you may have.

Plan on bringing a list of all medicines you are currently taking to the hospital. This list should include all prescription drugs (along with dose and frequency), and any other OTC medications, vitamins, herbs, or supplements.

Make sure you inform your team of any/all allergies you may have to medicine, food, environmental (dust, mold, fragrances), or metals (titanium, chromium), and what exactly happens when you have an allergic reaction.

Arrange for someone go to the hospital with you.

Have a family member or close friend go with you to the hospital on the day of your surgery. They can help fill out paperwork and make you feel more comfortable. You will probably be admitted to the hospital on the day of your surgery, so plan on arriving early.

Feeling under the weather?

If you develop a cough, cold, or fever, call your surgeon as soon as possible prior to your surgery. It is sometimes necessary to reschedule surgery when a cold or fever develops.

Get a good night's rest before surgery.

Try to relax and take it easy on the night before your surgery. A good night's sleep will go a long way in easing your nerves.

Take a bath or shower the night before your surgery.

If you smoke, you should stop to reduce your surgery risks, and improve your recovery. Your body needs all the oxygen it can get in order to heal properly.

Wear loose, casual clothing to the hospital.

Plan on wearing loose-fitting garments when you go to the hospital. This way you will have comfortable clothes to wear home when you are discharged.

Do not wear make-up, mascara, contact lenses, or nail polish to the hospital on the day of your scheduled surgery.

Leave all jewelry and other valuables and cash, at home.

On the day of surgery, bring only what you will need for the first 24 hours, like a toothbrush, glasses/case, or dentures/receptacle.

Pack a bag in advance.

You should pack a bag in advance for someone to bring you the day after surgery. Some items you may include are:

- Robe and slippers (rubber-soled are best)
- Underwear
- Toiletries and personal grooming items
- Toothbrush/toothpaste
- Alcohol-based hand-sanitizing gel or wipes
- Personal phone numbers you may need, and maybe a calling card
- Notebook/pen to keep notes and write down questions

Before surgery, you should confirm that the correct surgical body site will be marked prior to your anesthesia and surgical procedure.

Plan to have a responsible friend or relative take you home on discharge day.

Before surgery you should have a good idea of how long you will be in the hospital. It is very important that you have a family member or other trusted friend pick you up at the hospital on your discharge day.

If you are unable to arrange for someone to come for you, contact Hospital Social Services or Patient Services for assistance as soon as you are able. They should be able to arrange for transportation home.

Quick Tips to get a head-start before your surgery!

- If you live alone, try to arrange for someone to stay with you for the first week or so, to help you around the house
- Cook ahead and freeze several meals, and be sure to stock up on easy-to-prepare food items
- Tape down loose scatter carpets and electrical cords
- Install an elevated toilet seat or a commode

Preparing to Leave the Hospital

Before you leave the hospital, be sure you:

- **Confirm how to take the medications that you have waiting at home**
- **Know what signs to look for regarding post-surgical complications (such as infection or blood clots)**
- **Know if and when you can shower, and how to cover your bandages**
- **Know if and when you can change your bandage**
- **Know when to schedule a follow-up appointment**
- **Obtain answers to any other questions you may have. Remember you, the patient, has the right to ask as many questions as you may think of. Your doctor or a member of his staff will answer all of your questions.**
- **Write down as much information as possible, so you have a handy reference when you get home**

We wish you a speedy recovery!
For additional information, remember to visit us at:
www.Rxtohome.com