

Discharge Medications

You will be discharged with prescriptions for medications. Take the pain medications as prescribed and only for as long as you have pain.

Post-op Office Visit

Patients who undergo a **total joint replacement** will need to be seen in the office 2 weeks following their surgery. At that time we will remove the staples and take x-rays. Patients who have undergone an **arthroscopic procedure** will be followed up in the clinic in 5 - 8 days following their procedure. Any sutures will be removed at that time and further instructions will be given.

Post-Op Appt: _____

Wound Care

Total Joints: You will go home from the hospital with a clear, plastic like bandage covering your wound. There may even be some brownish fluid that drains into this bandage. This is OK. This plastic dressing should be removed 4-5 days following your discharge from the hospital. There is no need to re-dress the wound with bandages unless it is draining. It is best to leave it open to the air except when showering. You may take a shower prior to and after bandage removal as long as you cover the surgical site with plastic. We recommend Glad "Press and Seal," as it provides excellent waterproofing for showering.

Do NOT take a tub bath until the wound has completely healed. DO NOT ALLOW THE INCISION TO BE IMMERSED IN WATER UNTIL IT IS COMPLETELY HEALED (3-4 weeks).

Arthroscopy: Your surgical site will be tightly wrapped in bandages. Do not worry if you see blood coming through the bandages. A fair amount of fluid seepage is expected following this type of surgery. You may even have a pain pump with a small plastic tube going into the surgical area. The pain pump will last up to 48 hours after surgery. Remove all the dressings and, if applicable, remove the pump tubing from the surgical site 2 days after surgery. Band-Aids can be used to cover the stitches. You may take a shower prior to and after bandage removal as long as you cover the surgical site with plastic. We recommend Glad "Press and Seal," as it provides excellent waterproofing for showering.

Shoulder Slings: If you have undergone certain shoulder procedures, you will wake up with a shoulder immobilizer. This sling and immobilizer is purely for comfort. You do NOT have to wear this sling all the time. Wearing the sling is purely for comfort. In fact, we encourage you to carefully remove your arm and straighten your elbow and flex your wrist several times a day to keep them supple. You may also move your arm, while holding it straight down, in small circular motions, called pendulums. This will keep the shoulder from becoming too stiff. Most patients find that wearing the sling at night for the first few days following surgery is most comfortable for them. We also recommend that patients wear their sling when going out in public as a precautionary measure for at least a week or so.

If your incision becomes very warm to the touch, turns very red, begins draining pus or pain increases greatly when touched, please contact our office immediately. Remember, that total joint patients will notice general warmth to their replacement for up to 3 months following surgery. This is part of the body's self-healing inflammatory reaction. A fever greater than 101°F should be reported to our office immediately, otherwise a low grade temperature may be treated with Extra Strength Tylenol 2 tablets every 4 hours.

Constipation: Constipation can easily occur when patients are hospitalized, given general anesthesia and given large doses of pain relieving medications. We therefore request that all patients begin a stool softener 2 days prior to surgery. (Colace, ducosate sodium) You can purchase this over the counter medication at local pharmacies. You should also increase fiber, fluids and bowel regulating foods to your diet prior to your surgery. Good foods to include are prunes, prune juice, whole grain breads, oatmeal, fruits and vegetables. Fiber supplements such as Metamucil, Citrucel, or FiberCon are also very helpful.

If you are unable to have a bowel movement by the third day following surgery a laxative may be necessary. There are many good over the counter medications that you may use (Peri-colace, Sennakot, Phillips Milk of Magnesia, Dulcolax). If you are still unable to achieve a bowel movement with these medications, we recommend an enema (Fleets).

Changes in Pain: It is not unusual to have numbness, tingling and swelling in the areas surrounding the surgical site following surgery. This can occur even though you did not have these symptoms prior to surgery. Pain medication can be taken as prescribed to alleviate your discomfort. Physical therapy or another exercise program at the appropriate time may also help this problem.

Post Operative Activities

Physical Therapy: We will inform you when additional exercises are allowed. Do NOT engage in any additional exercises until you are given permission, as this could possibly cause damage to your surgical area. We may send you to physical therapy after your healing is complete, if appropriate.

All total joint patients will need to undergo a 4-8 week course of physical therapy. A physical therapy prescription will be written for you either prior to your discharge from the hospital or at your first post operative visit.

Knee arthroscopy patients generally do not need physical therapy. If therapy is required you will receive a prescription at your post-operative visit. You will be discharged from the hospital with crutches and will most likely only need these crutches for 2-3 days. You will be able to bear weight on your knee immediately following surgery.

Physical therapy for patients who undergo shoulder procedures will be determined on a case by case basis. We will discuss your need for physical therapy at your first post-operative visit.

Car Driving/Riding: Total Joint patients should not drive for at least 2 weeks following surgery. At your first post operative visit we will tell you when it is safe for you to begin driving again.

Arthroscopy patients should not drive for several days following surgery due to narcotic usage. You should not drive until you feel you can safely operate a motor vehicle. You can ride in a car for an unlimited time as long as you are comfortable. Sometimes getting out and stretching your legs every 45 minutes helps reduce your discomfort, especially when driving long distances.

If you have any questions or need further information, please contact our office.

Main Office @281-592-9100. You may also find answers to your questions on our website www.hseortho.com