

Total Hip Replacement Post-Operative Instructions

General Care

- Some swelling and bruising around the hip, into the groin and down to your knee, is normal in the first week, and usually increases for 5 days before it improves. Elevate to decrease swelling.
- If you have any wound drainage, please call my office.
- Do not apply creams or scar treatments to the incision site until after your first postop visit.
- Maintaining a regular bowel regimen is important after surgery, especially when using narcotic pain medications. Please use Colace and Senna regularly. If you have not had a bowel movement by postop day 3, please add milk of magnesia. If you have not had a bowel movement by postop day 5, please consider taking a dulcolax suppository or enema.
- Speed your recovery by eating more protein and fewer carbohydrates.
- You may feel uneven (longer or shorter) while walking the first few weeks. Don't adjust your shoes or buy shoe lifts; it will feel more normal soon as your muscles adjust.

Showering

- Your dressing is waterproof so you can shower with it on. If the inside gets wet mistakenly, remove it and place a sterile dry dressing; and call my office.
- After your dressing is removed, you may shower if there is no drainage from the wound. Do not scrub the incision area; instead let the water run over it.

Pain control

- Use cold therapy (frozen gel pack or frozen peas) 20 minutes on, 20 minutes off as needed. Icing before and after physical therapy can help.
- Take your pain medication as instructed.
- Elevate your legs for 20-30 minutes 4-5 times daily while you are awake, depending on the amount of swelling you have. **Keep your toes above your nose** by placing several pillows under your lower leg, with your torso and head more flat. Your leg should be raised about 2 feet (24 inches).

Driving

- When you are **no longer taking narcotic pain medication** and you feel comfortable moving your foot between the gas and brake pedals, you may drive. This can be anywhere from one week after surgery and on.

Post-op appointment

- Your first post-op appointment is around 2-3 weeks after the procedure.
- If not already scheduled, please call for an appointment (212) 305-6959.

When to call Dr. Cooper's office

- Fever above 101.5°F consistently (once or twice in the first few days is normal)
- Increased drainage or swelling
- Increasing redness around the incision
- Pain not controlled by pain medication
- Inability to bear weight on your operative leg
- Inability to tolerate your pain medications (for example, because of nausea or vomiting)
- Swelling in foot or calf that is accompanied by coolness or decreased sensation in foot