

TOTAL KNEE REPLACEMENT

If you are a candidate for knee replacement surgery, you probably anticipate that life after the surgery will be much like life before it, only without the pain. In many ways, you are correct. But change doesn't happen overnight and your active participation in the healing process is necessary to ensure a successful outcome.

Although you will be able to resume most activities, you should avoid activities that place excessive stress on the new knee. The following suggestions will help you adapt to your new joint and resume your daily activities safely.

PRIOR TO SURGERY

The preoperative skin preparation of the patient is essential in the prevention of surgical site infections. Preoperative showering with Hibiclens is highly recommended for this purpose. Shower the night before your surgery and do not use any lotion or powder after the shower.

DISCHARGE

Your hospital stay may last from 2 to 5 days, depending on how well you heal after surgery. Before you go home, you will need to meet several goals:

- Get in and out of bed by yourself
- Bend your knee approximately 90 degrees, or show good progress in bending your knee
- Extend (straighten) your knee fully
- Walk with crutches or a walker on a level surface well enough to get around your home and to climb up and down 2 to 3 stairs
- Do the prescribed home exercises

You may experience mild swelling in your leg after you are discharged. Elevating the leg and applying an ice pack for 15 to 20 minutes at a time will help reduce the swelling.

You will probably need some help at home for several weeks. If you are not able to meet the above goals within 2-5 days, you may be temporarily transferred to a rehabilitation center. The following tips can make your homecoming more comfortable.

- Rearrange furniture so you can maneuver with a walker or crutches. You may temporarily change rooms to avoid using stairs.
- Remove any throw or area rugs that could cause you to slip. Securely fasten electrical cords around the perimeter of the room.
- Install a shower chair, gripping bar and raised toilet in the bathroom
- Use assistive devices such as a long-handled shoehorn, a long-handled sponge and a grabbing tool or reacher to avoid bending too far over.