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Instruction Sheet following Total Hip Arthroplasty

Showering:

You may shower 48 hours after surgery. Please use **CAUTION!!** Be careful not to slip and fall. The effects of anesthesia and/or medication may make you drowsy or light-headed. Do not submerge your sutures (stitches) in a bathtub, hot tub, or pool until the doctor tells you it is okay to do so (after 2-3 weeks). You may leave your post-op dressing on until your first post op visit and may shower over it.

Dressing:

Keep the yellow, rubbery bandage over your incision **ON**—this may stay on for up to 2 weeks and is waterproof (you may shower over this bandage).

Cane/Walker:

You may **weight bear as tolerated**/walk on the leg as you feel comfortable and may use a walker/crutches or cane as needed for walking. A walker is often needed for about a week, followed by transition to a cane, until you are walking assistance free.

Activity:

You may walk as much as you want. High impact activities such as jumping, aerobics, tennis, and skiing are not permitted during the first 3 months after surgery. These activities can contribute to accelerated wear and should be done with caution after this time. Although guarantees against dislocation do not exist, the hip was noted to be sufficiently stable in surgery. You do **NOT** have any movement precautions with regards to your hip. When changing positions, please move slowly and deliberately. From a reclining position sit at the edge of the bed for a few minutes and get acclimated. Stand in position a few minutes before starting to walk. Please use your assistive device when you first start walking.

Ice and Elevation:

You can ice the area to reduce swelling and discomfort. Do not ice the area more than 20 minutes at a time. Let the area warm up for about 20 minutes before reapplication. Try to elevate the foot above the level of your knee (coffee table height) to reduce swelling down the leg. If you have a cryocuff, you may use this continuously. Do not apply ice directly to your skin.

Physical Therapy:

Physical therapy beginning the day of surgery is done to quickly regain range of motion and strength of the hip and minimize pain and swelling.

Medication:

You will be given pain medication that should be taken as prescribed. Please note that narcotic pain medication may cause constipation. Please remember to take stool softeners (Colace) when



using narcotics to help reduce the chance of constipation. You should not use alcohol together with narcotic medication. Do not drive or operate complex machinery while taking narcotic medication. Please note that most narcotic pain medications have side effects that may include nausea, vomiting, sedation, and/or dizzy spells. If you experience any of these side effects to a severe extent, you should contact our office. When your pain is well controlled (2 days to 2 weeks post-op), you may transition yourself to an anti-inflammatory and Tylenol.

You will also be discharged with a blood thinner, Aspirin 81mg or Lovenox 40mg, to prevent blood clots. You should take this medication as prescribed. It is important not to miss any doses of this medication. Please note that aspirin can cause an upset stomach or acid reflux. If this occurs, you may take an over the counter proton pump inhibitor such as Prilosec, Prevacid, or Nexium to help alleviate these side effects.

You should restart all of your prescription medications once discharged unless specifically instructed otherwise.

Follow-up visit:

You need to see the doctor 10-14 days following surgery for your first post-op visit. At that time your sutures will be removed if needed.

Common Concerns:

- Bruising and/or swelling of the knee, ankle, or foot are common after surgery. To relieve this discomfort it is best to ice and elevate the knee.
- Driving is not permitted within the first 2 weeks
- Sexual activity can resume after 2 weeks
- Antibiotic preventative treatment is required before dental and other invasive procedures. Please ask your surgeon about this at your first post-operative visit
- Return to work depends on the job requirement, transportation issues and multiple other factors. Rest is an important component of your healing both physically and psychologically. You can expect to feel fatigued during your day for the first couple of weeks but you will find that your endurance, energy levels, and ability to ambulate improve on a daily basis.

Please call if:

1. If at any time you have discomfort, hardness, swelling, or redness in the calf (behind the leg between the knee and the ankle) please call the doctor immediately.
2. Any oozing or redness of the wound, fevers (>100.4 degrees F), or chills.
3. Any difficulty breathing or heaviness in the chest.

REMEMBER - these are only guidelines for what to expect following a total hip arthroplasty. If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to call the office.