

Hip and Knee Replacement FAQs



Preparing for Surgery and Recovery

Understanding what to expect before and after hip or knee replacement can help you feel more prepared and confident. The information below covers common questions about surgery day, recovery, and what you will need at home.



Surgery Day: What Should I Expect?

Most hip and knee replacements are outpatient procedures, meaning most patients go home the same day as surgery. Please plan to go home after surgery, or to your care partner's home.



What Happens at Discharge on Surgery Day?

You may be discharged from:

- Same Day Surgery area, or
- Orthopaedic floor

Where you are discharged from depends on how you are doing and how many surgeries are scheduled that day.

Being discharged from the Orthopaedic floor does not mean anything is wrong or that you will stay overnight.



What are Care Partner Requirements on Surgery Day?

A care partner is required on surgery day. This should be someone you trust, a spouse, family member, or close friend.

Your care partner needs to:

- Be with you on surgery day
- Remain on campus/available by phone until discharge
- Provide transportation home

If a care partner or transportation home is not available, the surgery will be rescheduled.



What does Care Partner Support After Surgery Look Like?

After surgery, your care partner will need to:

- Stay with you once you return home on surgery day
- Check in on you a few times a day for the next few days
- Possibly provide transportation to physical therapy or post-operative appointments

Having support helps ensure a safer recovery at home.

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What are my Pain Expectations?

You will not be pain-free right after surgery, but pain should be manageable with medications and movement. Many patients find that gentle movement helps reduce discomfort.

Ice can help decrease swelling and pain. Swelling is often the most uncomfortable part of early recovery.

For safety, do not place a pillow under your knee before or after surgery. This can cause the leg to heal in a bent position and may affect your recovery.



What Can I do at Home to Help?

One of the most important things you can do at home is move regularly:

- Walk at least once an hour while awake.
- Avoid staying in bed all day.

Sitting upright in a chair, recliner, or on the couch is better for your heart and lungs.



Will I Start Moving After Surgery?

You will get up and begin moving soon after surgery.

Physical Therapy will:

- Assess you after surgery
- Make sure you can safely get around using your walker
- Teach you how to go up and down stairs, if needed

Most patients begin outpatient Physical Therapy within a few days of surgery. Outpatient therapy has more equipment and flexibility to support recovery.

If outpatient therapy is not an option, Home Health therapy can be arranged for the first two weeks.

Continue using your walker until your surgeon or physical therapist tells you it is okay to stop.



Can I Shower?

You will likely be able to shower the day after surgery. Do not soak or submerge your dressing. You will receive instructions specific to your situation.