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Anterior Hip Replacement Post-Op Instructions

Wound Care: Most patient's incisions will have buried dissolvable stitches along with skin glue over the top. This dressing will come off in 3 days. After the dressing is removed you may shower. It is ok to shower with the skin glue on. Pat the leg dry when done. Do not submerge the bandage in bath, hot tub, pool, etc. This glue dressing will eventually peel off in 2-3 weeks, DO NOT peel off. Generally, you can submerge the incision after 6 weeks. It is not unusual for these incisions to drain for a day or two after surgery. If there is excessive drainage to the edges of the bandage or leaking from the bandage after clinic hours or weekends, obtain gauze bandages from the local drugstore and hold with bandage tape. Change the gauze pads daily. If you experience any increased redness, drainage, wound dehiscence/openings please call the office at 703-490-1112. If you are sent home with a PREVENA or PICOS Incision Management System, please follow the instructions in the patient guide booklet.

Activity: Be as active as your hip lets you. But avoid setting too ambitious a schedule for yourself in the days and weeks after surgery. You may feel very tired and out of energy for the first few weeks or so. This is normal and will pass. If you find that after you are up for a while and your leg becomes sore, simply get back in bed or a chair, ice the front of your hip, take a pain pill and it should settle down. Keep ice on for at least 20 minutes on then 20 minutes off. Repeat this as necessary. Never put ice directly on the skin!!! This may cause frostbite! Use a walker in the beginning days after returning from the hospital. If you feel comfortable in the following days or weeks, then switch to a cane. Use the cane on the opposite side of your hip replacement.

Driving is allowed on your left total hip as soon as you feel comfortable in a car without a clutch and without taking narcotic pain medicine. Driving with your right total hip replacement is not allowed for 6 weeks.

Medications: You will be prescribed several different medications based upon your individual needs and potential drug allergies. You are to take these as directed and follow the prescription instructions closely. In the first day or so after surgery, take the pain medicine regularly. Don't wait until the pain is really bad; it is more difficult to control. If you take it and feel some relief for a few hours and then begin to have more pain, take some more. Don't be alarmed if after a few hours you need to take some more. It is not uncommon to experience more pain as the swelling within the hip increases and you begin to become more mobile with your hip. Taking pain medication before bedtime will assist in sleeping. Do not drive if you have taken any prescription pain medication!!! Pain medication can lead to constipation. High fiber diet, lots of fluids, and a stool softener (i.e. Colace) will be prescribed to you so that will help prevent this occurrence.

Concerns: Although hip replacement is safe, problems do occasionally arise. A low-grade fever (100.5) is not uncommon in the first 24-48 hours after surgery. If you develop any of the following signs or symptoms go directly to the Emergency Room if the symptoms are severe:

- Temperature greater than 102 degrees F measured by thermometer, along with redness around the incisions and increasing pain that does not respond to pain medication.
- Swelling in your lower leg and calf muscles with tenderness when you gently squeeze the calf.
- Shortness of breath and pain on deep breathing.

Follow up: First post-op visit will be 2 weeks after surgery date.