

Discharge from hospital

Day of Discharge

You can be discharged home once you and the clinical team are satisfied with your progress. This can often be on the day after surgery so come prepared for this.

Discharge Planning

Before you are discharged you will be given

- A discharge summary
- A letter to the GP practice or community nurse so that you can arrange a wound check
- A spare dressing
- Medication including pain killers. You can arrange further supplies through your GP
- An outpatient appointment letter (usually six to eight weeks following surgery)
- Any equipment provided by the Occupational Therapist

Your GP will receive a letter from your Surgeon with details of the operation performed and treatment given.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask for information, either whilst you are in hospital or by giving us a call when you get home.

Returning home and the first 6 weeks

The following section is designed to help you through the transition from hospital to home but always follow any specific advice given to you by the hospital team.

After major surgery you may feel reassured to have a friend or family member to help with simple chores and give moral support for a few days.

Pain Management

It can take time for pain to settle and everyone reacts differently. If your pain stops you from moving comfortably or prevents you sleeping at night, then you should continue with painkillers. As you recover from your surgery, you will find that you do not need to take painkillers as frequently.

Once you are at home your General Practitioner can prescribe further painkillers if needed and give advice if pain continues to be a problem.

Wound healing

All wounds progress through several stages of healing. You may experience sensations such as tingling, numbness and itching. You may also feel a slight pulling around the stitches or staples and a hard lump forming. These are perfectly normal and are part of the healing process. The wound is normally closed with a dissolvable suture (which does not need to be removed) and covered with a water resistant dressing that is usually kept in place until you have a wound check 10- 14 days post operatively. Scarring is variable and depends on your individual skin type. When the wound is completely healed (usually by 10-14 days), apply non-perfumed, moisturising cream to the scar.

Caring for Your Incision

- Keep your incision covered with the dressing until it is healed, usually 10-14 days.
- You may have a light shower provided that the healing wound is well protected by a waterproof dressing so that the incision does not get wet.
- Keep the incision dry

Eating

Due to your lack of activity you may lose your appetite or suffer from indigestion. Small meals taken regularly can help.

Going to the toilet

The difference in diet, the change in level of activity and the prescription of medication can lead to irregular bowel habits which should correct itself in time. If you are suffering from constipation, you can help yourself by eating a high fibre diet with plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables.

Becoming mobile again

It is important to walk on a regular basis and to steadily increase the distance as you recover. You can progress to using one crutch or a stick held on the side opposite to your operated leg as soon as you feel safe and comfortable to do so. As you improve you can walk around the house without a walking aid and then progress to walking outdoors without assistance. However, if you are uncomfortable or limp when walking then continue to use your walking aid.

Rest and activity

The operation is the beginning of a process of recovery which takes several months to complete, so it is possible you may feel tired and rather vulnerable in your first weeks at home. You should plan to steadily increase your activity day by day but also to set aside time each day to rest with the leg elevated to reduce any swelling and bruising.

As a general rule, gradually build up the amount of walking and activity you do guided by what feels comfortable for your hip. You will have days with less pain and others with slightly more discomfort. If you have an uncomfortable day, reduce your activities a little and then steadily increase them again.

Remember, an artificial hip is different to a normal joint and should be treated with respect. The risk of dislocation is greatest in the first six weeks whilst the tissues around the joint are healing and you are recovering from the surgery. During this time we recommend that you:

- Avoid forcing the joint
- Bend your operated hip within comfortable limits by bringing the knee towards the shoulder on the same side. Avoid the combination of bending the hip and knee across the body towards the opposite shoulder. This includes avoiding sitting with your legs crossed and taking care when putting on shoes and socks.

Sleeping

You may sleep in any position including lying on either side, unless otherwise instructed. You may find it more comfortable to lie on your un-operated side with a pillow between your legs to support the operated hip. Taking your prescribed painkillers before going to bed at night can also help you rest more comfortably

Sitting

Choose a chair which has a seat which is high enough for you to get comfortably in and out of. Chair arms will help you get up and down safely in the first few weeks of surgery.

Stairs

You will be taught to manage the stairs whilst you are in hospital. Use a bannister rail if there is one, and hold the stick or crutch in the other hand as shown in the following pictures:



Going up – lead with the unoperated leg first, followed by the operated leg and then the stick or crutch.



Going down – put the crutch or stick on the step below, then step down with the operated leg, followed by the un-operated leg.

Keep this method up until you feel strong enough to walk upstairs normally.

Washing / bathing

You are likely to feel more comfortable having a shower or wash rather than a bath in the first six weeks. Provided you keep the wound covered with a waterproof dressing whilst it is healing, you can have a shower as soon as you feel able to do so. A rubber mat will help reduce the risk of slipping in the shower.

Dressing instructions following hip surgery

You will be able to dress yourself after your operation. Remember the following points:

- Avoid forcing and overstraining and do not cross your legs when dressing
- You may find it easier to sit on the side of the bed or in a chair with your clothes next to your unaffected leg. To put pants or trousers over your feet, hold the waistband and lower garment to your feet, insert the operated foot, repeat with the other leg before pulling right up. This can be made easier by using a long handled aid.
- Begin to wear shoes as soon as possible. When putting on shoes and socks, it is easiest to reach down on the inside of the operated leg to avoid uncomfortable twisting of your hip (see pictures below). A long handled shoe horn can help with this.



Travel & Driving

You can return to travelling as a passenger in a car or on public transport when you feel confident and safe to do so, starting with short journeys.

You can return to driving once you are walking comfortably without a walking aid and feel safe to do so. This is not usually until 4-6 weeks after your surgery. You may wish to inform your insurance company before you start driving again.

Sexual activity

Unless you have been advised otherwise you should do what feels right for you. Sexual intercourse may be resumed, when you feel comfortable.

