

# Discharge Instructions for Hip Fracture Surgery



You had surgery to repair a hip fracture. The type of surgery you had depends on the location and severity of the fracture. You may have pins, screws, or rods (internal fixation devices) holding the fractured bone in place. Or some or all of your hip may have been replaced. You must take care of your hip as you recover at home or in a rehabilitation facility. This means moving and sitting the way you were taught in the hospital. You must also see your healthcare provider for follow-up visits as you slowly return to activity. Hip repair for fracture or hip replacement is major surgery. Don't be surprised if it takes a few months before you can move comfortably. Plan to have your family and friends help when you return home.

## Home care

- Take your pain medicine exactly as advised.
- Don't drive until your healthcare provider says it's OK. And never drive if you are taking opioid pain medicine.
- Wear the support stockings you were given in the hospital. Wear them 24 hours a day for 3 to 4 weeks.
- Make arrangements to have your staples removed around 2 weeks after surgery. The staples were used to close the skin incision.
- Get up and carefully move around to ease pain.
- If you got an artificial hip joint, tell all your healthcare providers—including your dentist—about the joint before any procedure. You may need to take antibiotics before dental work and other medical procedures. This is to reduce the risk for infection.

## Incision care

- Prevent infection by washing your hands often. If an infection occurs, it will likely need to be treated with antibiotics right away. Call your healthcare provider right away if you think you may have an infection. Symptoms of infection include a fever, chills, increased pain, redness, warmth, or white, greenish, or yellowish-colored fluid leaking from the incision.
- Check your incision daily for redness, soreness, or drainage.
- Don't soak your wound in water until your provider says it's OK. This means no hot tubs, bathtubs, or swimming pools.
- Wait 7 days after your surgery to start showering. Then shower as needed. Carefully wash your incision with soap and water. Gently pat it dry. Don't rub the incision or apply creams or lotions. And sit on a shower stool when you shower to keep from falling.

## Sitting and sleeping

- Don't sit for more than 30 to 45 minutes at a time.
- Use chairs with arms and sit with your knees slightly lower than your hips. Don't sit on low or sagging chairs or couches.
- Don't lean forward while sitting.
- Don't cross your legs.
- Keep your feet flat on the floor. Don't turn your foot or leg inward. This stresses your hip joint.

- Use a raised toilet seat for 6 weeks after surgery.
- Use pillows between your legs when sleeping on your back or on your healthy side.
- Sit on a firm cushion when you ride in a car and don't sit too low. Try not to bend your hip too much when getting in and out of the car.

## Moving safely

- Don't bend at the hip when you bend over. Don't bend at the waist to put on socks and shoes. And don't pick up items from the floor.
- Use a cane, crutches, a walker, or handrails until your balance, flexibility, and strength improve. And remember to ask for help from others when you need it.
- Free up your hands so that you can use them to keep balance. Use a fanny pack, apron, or pockets to carry things.
- Follow your healthcare provider's orders about how much weight to place on the affected leg.
- Do all exercises as advised.
- Arrange your household to keep the items you need within reach.
- Remove electrical cords, throw rugs, and anything else that may cause you to fall.
- Use nonslip bath mats, grab bars, an elevated toilet seat, and a shower chair in your bathroom.

## Follow-up

Make a follow-up appointment as advised by your healthcare provider.

## Call 911

Call 911 right away if you have any of the following:

- Chest pain
- Shortness of breath

## When to call your healthcare provider

Call your healthcare provider right away if you have any of the following:

- Hip pain gets worse
- Pain or swelling of your calf or leg not related to your incision
- Soreness or redness in your calf
- Fever of 100.4° F (38°C) or higher, or as advised by your provider
- Shaking chills
- Swelling or redness at the incision site gets worse
- Fluid leaking from the incision

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