

What to Expect After Surgery

Expectations for 0-2 Weeks

Swelling	<i>Typically increases around the incision for the first one to two weeks and may extend all the way to your foot. Follow foot elevation and icing protocols (toes above your nose!).</i>
Pain Control	<i>Most patients need some prescription pain medication and other adjunct medications. Use opioids for the shortest time possible and try to discontinue them in one to two weeks.</i>
Activity	<i>Get up several times per day and walk around your home. Most patients need a walker or cane during this time, and your therapist can help decide when to stop using them. If you can do so comfortably and safely, you can take short walks outside. Don't overdo it or you might delay your recovery.</i>
Range of Motion	<i>Follow your surgeon's dislocation precautions carefully. Do not purposely stretch your hip or thigh muscles.</i>
Physical Therapy	<i>Check with your surgeon. Some surgeons avoid formal therapy exercises during this phase.</i>
DVT Prevention	<i>Your primary blood clot prevention is movement, walking, and ankle pump exercises. Most patients should also be on a medication prescribed by your surgeon to prevent blood clots during the first two weeks or more after surgery.</i>
Surgeon Appointments	<i>Your surgeon or their PA will see you at 10-14 days after surgery (except for Dr. Dayton – he will see you at 6 weeks). The purpose of your first appointment is to check your incision, educate you, answer questions, and reassure you. If you had any medical issues during your hospital stay, make an appointment with your primary care provider as well.</i>

Expectations for 2-6 Weeks

Swelling	<i>Should be decreasing but you may still have swelling around the hip, and possibly in the foot and ankle at six weeks after surgery.</i>
Pain Control	<i>Most patients stop taking opiates during this phase of recovery. Work toward only taking only NSAIDs or acetaminophen.</i>
Activity	<i>Resume your normal home routine and increase outdoor walking distance.</i>
Range of Motion	<i>Follow your surgeon's dislocation precautions carefully. Do not purposely stretch your hip or thigh muscles.</i>
Physical Therapy	<i>Check with your surgeon. Some surgeons avoid formal therapy exercises during this phase.</i>
DVT Prevention	<i>Slowly increase your activity, and most patients will still be on a blood thinning medication during this time.</i>
Surgeon Appointments	<i>Your surgeon or their PA will see you at about 6 weeks after surgery.</i>

* Returning to Work

Returning to work is an individualized goal that varies greatly from patient to patient and is based on job duties, allotted time off, function, and desire to return.

This is your decision, and you should seek guidance from your surgeon, your family, and your employer.

^ Travel

Orthopedic surgeons may limit travel in the first several weeks after hip replacement due to concerns about blood clots with prolonged sitting in confined space.

+ Returning to Work

There are two criteria you must meet before driving after hip surgery.

First, you must be off all medications that might impede your ability to drive. These are primarily the opioid pain medications, but there might be others.

Secondly, you must be able to operate the vehicle safely. Ultimately it is your decision when you are safe to drive. Your surgeon and therapist cannot make this decision for you.

What to Expect After Surgery

Expectations for 6-12 Weeks

Swelling	<i>Should be decreasing and minimal in most patients by twelve weeks after surgery.</i>
Pain Control	<i>You should be off opiates, and off most of the other pain medications as well. Some patients use occasional over-the-counter pain relievers at this point. Instead of taking scheduled doses, try taking pain medications only as needed.</i>
Activity	<i>You should be back to your daily routine. Most people are driving and back to work. Walking longer distances outdoors should not be limited by your hip by 3 months after surgery.</i>
Range of Motion	<i>Continue to be careful with stretching your hip. It's not fully healed yet. You may notice that putting on your socks and shoes is becoming easier, and that continues to improve naturally with time.</i>
Physical Therapy	<i>If you believe you have strength deficits or gait abnormalities and have not yet started with a therapist, now is a good time to discuss this topic with your surgeon.</i>
DVT Prevention	<i>At this point, your risk of a blood clots is close to what it was before surgery, so most patients can discontinue blood-thinning medications unless your medical providers advise otherwise, or you have underlying conditions that require them.</i>
Surgeon Appointments	<i>You will see your surgeon or their PA at 12-14 weeks after surgery.</i>