

Frequently asked questions after surgery

How long I have to wear the wide surgical stockings?

The surgical stockings must be worn during the day for 2 weeks after surgery. They may be removed at night while you sleep and/or for showers. However, the stockings can help with swelling control and can be worn longer if you wish to minimize swelling of the operative leg.

When he can shower?

On the third day following surgery. Surgical dressing is waterproof. You do not need to use any special soap. Pat dry incision after your dressing is removed.

When can I remove surgical dressing?

Surgical dressing needs to be removed 1 week after surgery.

How long will I be using the walker and a cane?

Patient's typically uses a walker for 1-2 weeks after surgery and then progress to a cane. Your physical therapist will provide you and make that decision when to make those transitions.

How long do I have to take aspirin?

If you are taking Aspirin to thin your blood, please continue at the twice per day dose for a full 30 days from surgery. At that time, you may go back on your normal Aspirin dose, or discontinue the Aspirin if you were not taking Aspirin before surgery.

How long will I be going to physical therapy?

Patient will participate in outpatient physical therapy depending on the surgery, a prescription will be provided for 2-3 visits for 6-8 weeks. Some patients may need more or less depending on their recovery.

When can I return to work?

Returning to work is dependent on the type of work that you do. It is important that you obtained proper time off from work to allow for rehabilitation after surgery. We ask patients to take 3 months of FMLA. Patient's may or may not need the full amount and return to work to full duty can be discussed during postoperative follow-up visits.

How do I get my pain medications refilled?

Pain medications can be refilled through our office during your postoperative period. Please call our office between Monday through Thursday, during working hours and all prescription medications will be done electronically (except for those needed to be taken to a military facility). We suggest you call when you start running low (10 pills or less). Do not await until the last minute to refill your medications. You may need to wait 24 hours for electronic prescriptions to be filled by your pharmacy.

Refills will not be available on Fridays or weekends.

Is it normal to have difficulty sleeping after surgery?

Yes, a significant amount of patients have difficulty sleeping after surgery. Especially knee replacement. Most patients average 2-4 hours of sleep at a time. When you wake up at night, consider taking pain medication and doing a short walk to decrease the stiffness. Try Benadryl 25 or 50 mg to help with sleep.

Is it normal to have poor appetite after surgery?

Yes, it is common and mostly due to a combination of medications and pain. It is important that you eat a healthy diet, high in protein and/or well-balanced meals. You must ensure that you get the proper amount of healthy calories on a daily bases after surgery.

When can I resume sexual activities?

You may resume activities when you feel well enough, and it makes sense to you as the patient.

When can I return to the gym, recreational and/or outdoor activities?

Approximately 3–6 weeks after surgery, depending on the type of activity. Stationary / recumbent bike and pool activities after 2 weeks as long as the incision is completely dry, is safe. It is safe to do all the exercises provided by physical therapy. At 6-8 weeks, most patients can return to their normal activities and this can be discussed during your second post operative office visit.

Will I set off metal detectors?

Yes and no, most metal detectors do not go off. But in some areas, security has different parameters on their metal detection. It would be a good idea, to let security know you have a new prosthesis and/or give yourself enough time to travel through security just in case. You do not need an implant ID card.

Do I need a joint replacement card to travel? – No. The TSA does not change the way you are screened with or without a joint replacement card. For more information, please follow the Disabilities and Medical Conditions link at www.tsa.gov.

What can I put on my surgical incision?

Do not use any scented lotions until the wound has healed. You may use vitamin E oil / lotion or any product for minimizing scars, i.e. Mederma, and/or Scar therapy silicone bandages sold over-the-counter at the pharmacy.

Remember to use sunscreen on your incision for the first several months after surgery.

When can I drive? – Yes, most patients feel comfortable driving at around 2 weeks. Please no driving while on narcotics.

My knee is still.... – Typical concerns at this time are continued stiffness, warmth, swelling, or night pain. These are all completely normal, and part of the healing process. Remember, maximal healing from knee replacement typically takes **1 full year**. The concerns you have now should resolve by then.

My knee feels “numb” on the outside – This is a normal sensation as the nerve that gives sensation to the skin along the outside of the knee was disturbed with surgery. This area may also burn as the nerve attempts to regenerate. Nerve regeneration is a very slow process, with maximal improvement coming by 1-2 years.

Can I kneel on my new knee? – Yes. Mechanically, kneeling on your knee does not harm the implants. However, most people find it “uncomfortable” to kneel on their knee replacement. With repeat practice, this should not be an issue for you.

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Do I need antibiotics for routine dental cleanings? – No. The January 2015 American Dental Association clinical practice guideline states, “In general, for patients with prosthetic joint implants, prophylactic antibiotics are not recommended prior to dental procedures to prevent prosthetic joint infection.” For more information, please search www.ada.org.

Are there any restrictions on my knee replacement? – No. Please use good common sense, but there is no specific activity you need to avoid. If your knee hurts too much, you are simply doing too much. With normal activities, the plastic used in your knee replacement should last about 30 years. We will check your new knee with periodic x-rays to monitor for wear or mechanical issues.

Please enjoy your new knee, and you can also visit Dr. Petrow's homepage at www.TucsonRoboticJointReplacement.com for additional information.