

**Orthopaedic and Spine Institute
21 Spurs Lane, Suite 245, San Antonio, TX 78240**

www.saspine.com

Tel# 210-487-7463

Joel B. Nilsson, M.D., P.A.

**DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS FOLLOWING
TOTAL HIP REPLACEMENT**

FOLLOW-UP

Your first follow-up appointment is scheduled for _____ at _____
in our office.

This handout includes many of the questions you might have following your discharge to home.

If you have other questions, please call the office at 210-487-7463.

**If you should have SHORTNESS of BREATH or CHEST PAIN,
call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department (ED)**

CALL OUR OFFICE AT 210-487-7463 IF YOU HAVE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING

- If you have any drainage or redness associated with your wound
- If you have a fever greater than 101.5° F° (38.5°C)
- If you have persistent calf pain or swelling that does not improve with elevation (putting the leg on two or three pillows bringing it above the level of your heart).
Calf pain or swelling could be an indication of a blood clot.
- If your pain seems to be worsening
- If you have difficulty urinating or if you have symptoms of burning with urination

MEDICATIONS

You will be given prescriptions for pain medication. Take your pain medicine as directed on the instructions.

ANTICOAGULATION

After surgery you will be placed on a blood thinner to prevent blood clots. Most people are started on Lovenox while they are in the hospital. You will take Lovenox for 2-3 weeks following surgery. You will not need to have blood work done to monitor your blood levels. Once you stop taking the Lovenox you should take one aspirin (325 mg) twice a day for 2 more months.

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WOUND CARE

Dr. Nilsson routinely uses staples to close his incisions. These are least reactive with the skin and are less likely to strangulate the skin margins.

You may shower seven days after surgery. Use a gentle soap and pat (not rub) the surgical site dry. We would prefer that you not soak in a tub until one month after surgery.

You may also experience some numbness on either side of your incision. This is normal and is due to the nerve endings being cut when the incision was made at surgery. A sense of numbness may always be there; however, in time it may decrease in severity.

PHYSICAL THERAPY

Perform the exercises that were explained to you by the therapists while in the hospital. A therapist will come to your home for two to six weeks to help you gain strength and to teach you additional exercises to do on the days he/she does not come to your home. This will help you regain your activity level.

You may place as much weight as comfortable on your leg. The therapist will instruct you in the use of crutches or a walker for additional support while ambulating. You need to use these until Dr. Nilsson tells you it is okay to stop using them. At the time of your six-week follow-up visit he will most likely instruct you to discontinue their use.

HOW LONG MUST I WEAR THE WHITE TED STOCKINGS?

TED stockings must be worn for two weeks from the surgery date. They are used to help

control swelling and improve circulation of blood back to your heart. TED stockings must be worn during the day and may be removed at nighttime, as long as you put them back on when you wake in the morning. *If you still have swelling after the two weeks, continue wearing the stockings during the day until the swelling is gone. To help reduce swelling, lie flat three times a day for 30 minutes and elevate your leg on two or three pillows (above the level of your heart).*

SWELLING

- Swelling is normal after this type of surgery. The swelling may last for six weeks to three months and will gradually decrease.
- To reduce swelling, lie flat and elevate the leg on two or three pillows. Do this for 30 minutes, three times a day.

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WHAT ARE HIP PRECAUTIONS? Hip precautions are things you need to do to keep your hip from dislocating. They are as follows:

- Do not cross your legs at the knees
- Do not twist your body at the waist
- Do not turn your foot (on the operated side) outward
- Do not flex your hip greater than 90°
- Do not bend at the waist
- Minimize your lifting to no more than 20 pounds in the first three months and 40 pounds thereafter
- Keep pillows between your legs when sleeping
- Sit for only 30-45 minutes at a time
- Sit in a relatively high firm chair. Do not sit on low chairs or couches with soft cushioning.
- You may ride in a car; however, you must stop every 30 minutes to get out and stretch for five to ten minutes.
- Do not sleep on your operative side until two weeks after surgery. No matter what side you are sleeping on, keep a pillow between your legs.
- To reduce swelling, lie flat and elevate the leg on two or three pillows. Do this for 30 minutes, three times a day.

HOW LONG MUST I MAINTAIN HIP PRECAUTIONS?

Complete hip precautions must be maintained for ten weeks following surgery. After that, an abbreviated set of precautions is observed.

WHEN MAY I DRIVE?

Due to weakness in your leg muscles and the danger of having an accident, we do not recommend you to drive a car until six weeks after your surgery. It is okay for you to go for a ride in the car with someone else driving. It is advisable that you not sit for any longer than 30 minutes at a time as this may cause increased swelling. After sitting for 30 minutes you should get up and walk around.

After 6 weeks it is up to you as the responsible driver to determine whether you are safe to drive or not.

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WHAT MAY I DO FOR ACTIVITY FOLLOWING SURGERY?

You may walk as much as tolerated, using pain and swelling as your guide. You should limit the number of times you climb stairs, as this may increase your pain and swelling. At four to six weeks after surgery you may slowly increase stair climbing. Swimming and stationary biking are good forms of exercise. When using a stationary bike, you will initially need to make the seat high and the resistance low. Use crutches or a walker for support when walking, and advance to a cane when your therapist advises you it is safe to do so.

WHEN MAY I SWIM?

You may resume swimming at six weeks postop. This will be discussed at the time of your four-week follow-up appointment.

HOW LONG WILL I BE OUT OF WORK?

You may usually return to work approximately ten to 12 weeks after surgery. If you have a sedentary job, you may be able to return sooner. Limitations and precautions in the workplace will be discussed prior to your return to work.

ARE THERE THINGS I CANNOT DO AFTER MY HIP REPLACEMENT?

You should not do high-impact activities such as jumping or running. These types of activities can cause the prosthesis to wear out sooner or become loose. This will be discussed with you in detail at the time of your six-week follow-up visit.