Post total hip replacement
Commonly asked questions by patients

Orthopaedic Surgery

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If you require this document in another language, large print, braille or audio version, please contact Patient Information on 01709 424281 or email patientinformation@rothgen.nhs.uk
Please note these are guidelines. Your Consultant may have a particular protocol they follow so seek further clarification from them if in doubt.

When should you have a follow up and should you have a check X-ray?
You normally have an X-ray on the ward before you are discharged home. Another X-ray is done when you go back for your follow-up appointment with the Consultant. X-rays may then be performed at 6 weeks (this is dependent upon the Consultant), 3 months, 12 months and at 5 years with the Arthroplasty Nurse.

When can I take my stockings off?
Usually 6 weeks after your operation. Sometimes they can be removed earlier if they are ill-fitting or if your mobility has nearly returned to normal.

How long can I expect to get pain in my groin?
This can last for a few months after your operation.

How long should it take for the swelling to settle?
This can take anything from up to 6 months to a year to resolve.
When will I be able to lie on the operated side?
The wound has normally healed 2 weeks after your operation. You can usually start to sleep on the operated side after 6 weeks.

Is it normal to have post operative aching/soreness and how long should this last for?
This can usually last for several months.

How long should I follow precautions for?
The precautions should normally be followed for up to 3 months, however this is dependent upon your Consultants’ preference, and should always be checked with them.

How long can I expect to be limping for after my operation?
There are many reasons for a limp. This is expected for the first few months after your operation. The majority will have settled after 3 months, some may continue to limp up to 12 months after the operation.

I have some post op numbness and pins and needles is this normal and how long should it last for?
This can take up to 6 months to resolve, however in some cases you may be left with some symptoms. Numbness adjacent to the scar site could be permanent.
Should I be shown how to get in/out of the bath and when will I be able to get in the bath normally?
You will be shown on the ward by the Occupational Therapist how to get in and out of the bath safely whether you have had one or both hips replaced.

When should I be expected to no longer need my walking aid?
This is dependent on several factors including how you walked before your operation and the extent of any damage to your old hip joint. It is better to walk well with a stick than limp without.

My legs feel like they are different lengths, is this normal?
Some patients have a feeling that their legs are different lengths. If you do then let a member of the Therapy Services team and your medical team (Consultant) know.

When can you drive?
You can normally return to driving 8-9 weeks after your operation. Before driving you need to ensure that you are able to safely do an emergency stop.

Can I cross my legs?
This is dependent upon your Consultants’ preference and should be checked with them. Some allow patients to cross their legs after 3 months.
When can you have sex? Should I avoid any positions and for how long?
You can usually do this when you are feeling comfortable. Please see the diagram below for positions that are safe and those to avoid. The lined area indicates the operated leg. Pillows placed under your knees can provide extra support and comfort.

**Positions that are safe following total hip replacement**
- Patient on top
- Partner on the bottom.
- Patient lying on side with operated leg on top.
- Partner on top
- Patient on the bottom.

**Positions to avoid following total hip replacement**
When can I return to swimming and do breast stroke again?
You can return to swimming usually from 3 months after your operations. Breast stroke at this stage is fine to do.

When can I play golf again?
You can usually return to playing golf after 2 months gradually building up your tolerance.

When can I return to bowling?
You can usually return to bowling 3 months after your operation if you feel comfortable doing so.

When will I be able to start running/jogging again?
This is dependent upon the type of new joint you have and needs to be discussed with your consultant.

When will I be able to dance again?
You can return to dancing usually 3 months after your operation if you feel comfortable.

Will I ever be able to do a pivot/twist action on that leg?
You can do this normally 3 months after your operation if you feel comfortable.
When will it be safe for me to fly and will I need a medical card incase I set the metal detectors off?

It is best to avoid flying for 3 months after your surgery. The Arthroplasty Nurse will issue you with a ‘Joint Replacement Card’ that you can use at the airport which will outline your medical status.
Post total hip replacement

Notes
How to contact us
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Pre Assessment Clinic
Telephone 01709 427944

Ward B2
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Ward B3
Telephone 01709 424316

Switchboard
Telephone 01709 820000

Useful contact numbers
NHS Direct
Telephone 0845 4647

Health Info
Telephone 01709 427190

Stop Smoking Service
Telephone 01709 422444

Patient Services
Telephone 01709 424461

A&E
Telephone 01709 424455

For GP out of hours,
contact your surgery

Useful websites
www.nhs.uk
www.direct.gov.uk
www.therotherhamft.nhs.uk

We value your comments
If you have any comments or
concerns about the care we have
provided please let us know, or
alternatively you can write to:

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