FAQ’s for Total Hip Replacement

1. How long does a hip replacement last?
   • Clinical research has shown a total hip replacement has a 98% survivorship and can last 20-25 years. The life of a total hip replacement largely depends on the patient’s age, weight, activity level and overall health. A hip replacement is a device which is subject to wear and tear.

2. Where will I go after discharge from the hospital?
   • In most cases patients return home following discharge from the hospital.

3. How long until I can drive a car?
   • You may drive your car once you have full control of your surgical leg. If you had surgery on your left leg and drive an automatic transmission car you may be able to drive as early as 3-4 weeks following surgery if you are not taking pain medications. If a hip replacement was performed on the right hip and/or you drive a manual transmission you may be unable to drive for 4-6 weeks.

4. When can I return to work?
   • Your returning to work greatly depends on what type of work you do. Sit down jobs or office jobs you may be able to return between 4-6 weeks depending on your recovery. Jobs which require a lot of walking or standing you return to work between 2-3 months.

5. Will I need assistance at home following surgery?
   • Returning home directly from the hospital you will most likely require assistance with house cleaning, meal preparation, etc. depending on the progress you made in the hospital.

6. Will I need home physical therapy?
   • Following a total hip replacement patients do not require at home physical therapy but requires outpatient physical therapy 2-3 times a week for at least 4 weeks.

7. When will I be able to walk following surgery?
   • You will be walking the day of your surgery with the use of a cane or walker. You will walk with either a cane or walker for 2 – 4 weeks depending on your recovery.

8. When can I return to stair climbing?
   • The physical therapy department at the hospital will have you climbing stairs before you are discharged from the hospital. The speed in which you climb the stairs depends on your progress.

9. Do I need to donate my own blood?
   • Most patients do not require a blood transfusion following hip replacement. Occasionally a blood transfusion is required and you may donate your own blood.

10. What can I do to prepare for recovery?
    • We recommend 2 weeks of physical therapy prior to your hip replacement to strengthen your surrounding muscles.

11. How long will my incision be?
    • Replacement done utilizing a minimally invasive technique usually is performed through a 5-9 inch incision.

12. When should I have a hip replacement?
    • Your surgeon will determine if you are a candidate for total hip replacement through and x-ray and physical examination. It is your decision to schedule surgery based on your discomfort, pain, loss of quality of life.
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13. Am I too old for a hip replacement?
   • A patient’s age is not the general concern when considering total hip replacement. Your primary care physician usually determines your ability to undergo a total hip replacement.

14. What are the risks and complications for hip replacement?
   • The risks involved with hip replacement are uncommon but can occur include but not limited to injuries to the nerves and blood vessels, loss of motion to the hip, stiffness to the hip, pulmonary embolism, thrombophlebitis, and failure of the prosthesis, fracture, and possible need for future surgery.

15. Do hip replacements fail?
   • Hip replacements can fail commonly due to loosening of the prosthesis from the bone and wearing of one or more of the components. If this were to occur, a revision surgery can be performed to correct most reasons of failure.

16. How long prior and following my hip replacement can I not go to the dentist?
   • We ask you do have any type of dental work 8 weeks prior and following a hip replacement to prevent an infection.

17. What medications do I need to discontinue prior to surgery?
   • Please discontinue the use of Aspirin or any product containing aspirin 10 days prior to surgery. This includes Plavix, Mobic, Celebrex, Motrin (Ibuprofen), Advil, Aleve, Vitamin E, Gingko Biloba, and Multivitamins. You may take Tylenol based products.

18. Is it normal to have numbness along the outside of my hip following surgery?
   • You may experience some numbness on the outside of your hip, this occurs when making the incision damaging nerves. This usually goes away with time.

19. Is it normal to have a clicking or a clunk within my hip?
   • The clicking or clunking some experience following a hip replacement is the artificial surfaces coming together.

20. Will my implant set off metal detectors?
   • If you have a hip replacement most likely your hip replacement is made out of metal which may set off metal detectors, we will supply you with a card for your wallet which states you have received a metal hip replacement.

21. When can I shower/bathe following my hip replacement?
   • Avoid showering or bathing until your incision is completely dry.

22. How long will I be in the hospital?
   • The average hospital stay for a hip replacement is 2-4 days.

23. How long is my surgery?
   • Your time in the operating room is approximately 90 minutes followed by [ ] time in the recovery room.

24. P.A.T. information
   • Approximately 2 weeks prior to surgery Pre Admission Testing will contact you for [ ].

25. What should I bring to the hospital?
   • Comfortable loose fitting clothing which easily stretches above the hip along with rubber soled shoes which are to be worn at physical therapy.
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26. Will I take Coumadin following hip replacement?
   • You will take Coumadin for 4 weeks following a hip replacement to prevent a deep vein thrombosis.

27. Why Am I to take a Coumadin the evening before my surgery?
   • You are to take a single 5mg. of Coumadin the evening before your surgery after dinner to prevent a blood clot from forming during the operation.

28. Dental anti-biotic
   • Following a hip replacement we recommend along with the American Medical Association what you are take antibiotics prior to any dental procedure indefinitely.

29. When can I resume taking all of my medications following hip replacement?
   • You may resume all of your medications upon discharge from the hospital unless indicated otherwise by your doctor.

30. Constipation following hip replacement?
   • Following your hip replacement the pain medications you are prescribed may cause constipation, if this is the case we often recommend the “Brown Bomber” to counter act the constipation.
     1 Oz. Milk of Magnesia
     4 Oz., Prune Juice
     Mix milk of magnesia and prune, microwave for 30 seconds and mix.
     Drink in the morning before breakfast or in the evening before dinner, this can be repeated after 6 hours if needed.

31. How often do I wear the Compression Stocking following hip replacement?
   • The compression stockings are to be worn during the day and may be taken off at night before going to bed. You will wear the compression stockings for 4 weeks following a hip replacement.