

# Total Joint Replacement Post-Operative Instructions

## BANDAGE CARE



- Leave your bandage on when you leave the hospital. It will stay on your leg until the follow up appointment with your Surgeon.
- Call your Surgeon if your bandage is coming off, it is full of drainage, or if drainage is leaking out of the bandage.

### Healing Normally



- Don't remove your bandage or peel it back to look at your incision.
- Don't pick at scabs near your incision.
- Don't let animals lie against your surgery leg while it is healing.

### Call Your Surgeon



## SHOWERING



- Have someone clean your shower and faucet (where the water comes out) using Clorox or a cleaner that kills mold.
- Use liquid soap instead of bar soap when you take a shower.
- Use a **clean** washcloth when you wash your surgery leg.



- Don't use the same washcloth to clean your surgery leg that you used to clean the rest of your body. Don't use loofahs or sponges either.
- Don't soak your leg under water in a bathtub, pool, lake, ocean or jacuzzi for at least 6 weeks.

### Follow these instructions after your post operative appointment:

- After the surgeon takes off your bandage, wait two days before you get your incision wet and take a shower. If there is a gauze bandage, remove it before you shower.
- When you shower, put the Chlorhexidine wash (special soap) on your mitt to very gently clean your incision and surgery leg. Use this wash once a day until the bottle is empty. It is the same body wash that you used the three days before surgery.
- Use a new mitt each time you shower and throw it away after use. After you've used all 3 mitts, start using a clean washcloth when you wash your surgery leg. If it starts causing redness or irritation, stop using it.



### WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER SURGERY

- You may notice more pain, swelling and bruising for the next few days. This is normal. This can happen because the pain block has worn off and you are becoming more active.
- Ice or cold therapy helps with pain and swelling. Put the ice or cold wrap over your pants or a thin cloth so it does not get too cold on your leg.
  - **Ice packs** – You can use them 3-4 times a day, for 15-20 minutes at a time.
  - **Cold Machine** – If you are using a cold machine you can wear it as much as you'd like, even at night.
- Your TED hose will also help reduce swelling.
- Continue using the incentive spirometer for the next 2 weeks to decrease your chances of getting pneumonia.
- You have been scheduled an appointment with your Surgeon and your medical doctor for a check-up. It is important that you go to both of these appointments.
- Take your medication to prevent blood clots exactly as prescribed. Contact your surgeon's office **immediately** if you are unable to fill your prescription.

### WHEN TO CALL YOUR SURGEON

- The bandage is coming off, is full of drainage, or if drainage is leaking out of the bandage.
- You suddenly have a lot more pain.
- The drainage from your incision smells bad.
- You have more redness, warmth and swelling around your incision.
- You have a temperature higher than 101.5 or shaking chills.

### USING YOUR WALKER

- Look straight ahead when walking, not down at your feet.
- Push your walker an arm's length in front of you.
- Step forward with your weaker leg first. This is your surgery leg.
- Do not step too close to the front of the walker or you may lose your balance.
- Instructions for using stairs:
  - **Upstairs** – Step up with your stronger leg first, then bring your surgery leg up to meet it.
  - **Downstairs** – Step down with your surgery leg first, then bring your stronger leg down to meet it.
  - **Tip** – Up with the good; down with the bad.



### FALL PREVENTION

- Put away loose rugs.
- Remove clutter, keep pathways clear and keep your floors clean and dry.
- Wear shoes that are secure on your feet with rubber or non-skid soles.
- Use nightlights, in case you go to the bathroom at night.