

T O T A L H I P R E P L A C E M E N T

PATIENT/FAMILY INFORMATION SHEET

What is a Total Hip Replacement?

Total hip replacement is also called hip joint replacement. It is surgery to replace a badly damaged hip joint with man-made parts. The artificial parts are called a prosthesis. The prosthesis is made of metal or a mixture of metal and plastic.

The surgery is done to lessen pain and make moving easier. It is mostly for people with bad osteoarthritis or rheumatoid arthritis of the hip. Most hip replacements are successful and represent a positive change. However, it takes most patients at least 3-5 months to get back their strength and energy.

What Can I Do To Protect My New Joint?

For the next three months, you must be careful about how you move or place your affected leg. The reason for these safety measures is to keep your hip from coming out of position in the joint.

- Keep your injured leg facing forward at all times, even in bed. Do not turn your hip or knee out.
- Put a pillow between your legs when you lie down on your side.
- When you sit, use a chair that keeps your knees lower than your hips.
- You may need to use a firm cushion to raise chair seats. Consider buying or renting a raised toilet seat.
- Sit only in chairs that have arms. When you get up from a chair, move to the edge and use the chair arms to help you stand up. Place your affected leg in front of your stronger leg. Push up with the strong leg, keeping your affected leg in front while getting up.
- **Ask for assistance with putting on socks and shoes.**
- **Do not** sit on low chairs, low stools, or low toilet seats. Do not sit in reclining chairs.
- **Do not** cross your legs when you are sitting, lying, or standing.

See "Hip Precautions: After Hip Replacement Surgery" handout.

You will also need to wear TED hose (support socks). This will help promote circulation and lessen swelling in your legs until you are walking around more. Assistance with putting on stockings is strongly recommended.

What Do I Need To Do For Follow-Up?

- Take your medications as prescribed (see discharge instruction form).
- Call your physician to schedule a follow-up visit.
- You may bathe or shower in 14 days.
- Antibiotics: After a total joint replacement you will always need to take prophylactic antibiotic before any major or minor procedure or if you have an infection. Bring the handout, "Prophylactic Antibiotics Following Joint Replacement" to your physician's office when scheduling a procedure or if you are being treated for an infection.

What Do I Need To Report to My Physician?

Although complications following total hip replacement surgery are uncommon, you need to be aware of those signs and symptoms that warrant a call to your physician.

Seek immediate care for the following:

- You have trouble breathing all of a sudden. This could be a sign that you have a blood clot in your lung. It could also mean that you are allergic to a medicine you are taking.
- You fall and injure your hip.
- Your affected leg or toes feel numb, tingly, cool to the touch, or look blue or pale

Contact your orthopedic surgeon if you experience any of the following:

- Your stitches/staples are swollen, red or have drainage coming from them. This may mean that they are infected.
- Your stitches/staples come apart.
- Your bandage becomes soaked with blood or other drainage.
- Your get a temperature over 101⁰ F.
- You have more pain in your hip or trouble moving around.
- You have questions or concerns about your surgery or medicine.

For more Patient Education Fact Sheets, see the Greenwich Hospital web site at www.greenhosp.org and click on Patients & Visitors, then Patient Education Rev. 9/04