



Let's get moving again.

A Patient's Guide to Orthopedic Surgery and Recovery



Dignity Health®

Northridge Hospital
Medical Center

A Patient's Guide to Orthopedic Surgery and Recovery

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Hello.

Thank you for choosing Dignity Health – Northridge Hospital for your total joint replacement surgery. Your hip or knee replacement surgery will be performed by one of the most experienced orthopedic surgical teams in Los Angeles.

Dignity Health – Northridge Hospital's Orthopedic Program offers broad treatments by our board-certified orthopedic physicians. Our center works efficiently to diagnose and effectively treat complex cases. Our orthopedic surgeons specialize in many advanced techniques, including minimally invasive procedures to quickly restore function, improve mobility and decrease pain.

This guide is designed to give you the important information you need to achieve the best outcome from your joint replacement surgery. This guide addresses the following:

- Preparing for your upcoming surgery
- What to expect during your hospital stay
- Successfully recovering at home



How Does the Wellness Program Work?

The Orthopedic Wellness program uses a patient-centered team approach. Patients who become active partners in their own care achieve better outcomes including:

- Shorter hospital stays
- Lower infection rates
- Shorter recovery time with an early return to activity

Pre-Operative Total Joint Replacement Education Class

Please review this Total Joint Replacement Guide before attending the class and bring it with you to class. During class you will receive useful information about your surgery and recovery. You will also have the opportunity to ask questions.

Mondays, 2 to 4 p.m.

Northridge Hospital Medical Center

Classroom 6

18300 Roscoe Blvd.

Northridge, CA 91325

Please call to register: 818.885.8500 ext. 2498



Professionals Supporting Your Care

We look forward to taking care of you. Please review definitions for each member of your care team and take note of the important contact numbers below. We recommend tearing this sheet out and keeping it by the phone.

Nurse Practitioner (NP): 818.885.8500 ext. 2498 and ext. 2868

The navigator serves as a key member of your care team during your hospital stay. They work closely with you and your surgeon to ensure seamless care.

Care Coordinator: 818.885.5427

Our care coordinators support your discharge by ensuring that you have the equipment and support you need to recover safely.

Physical Therapist/Occupational Therapist: 818.885.8500 ext. 3663

Our therapy team helps you return home by evaluating and training you in safe mobility and joint function.

Transitional Care Team: 24/7 HOTLINE 818.885.3577

Our transitional care team is in place to make sure that your discharge is safe. We have a 24/7 hotline in case you need any medical advice or have any questions pertaining to your recovery. Even though you are no longer in the hospital, this service is part of your surgery—so don't hesitate to call.

Other Team Members

Other members from our team will support you during your hospital stay including hospitalists and pain management specialists. Hospitalists oversee your care while you are admitted in our hospital after your procedure. They work in coordination with the orthopedic surgeon to ensure continuity in the care you receive. Our pain management specialists will help manage your pain while in the hospital and once you go home.

Preparing for Surgery

Before Your Surgery Checklists

The following checklists are guides to help you prepare for surgery and recovery. Careful preparation improves the chance of a complication-free recovery.

To Complete Before Surgery

- ☐ I have verified with my insurance company that I have coverage for my surgery.
- ☐ I have attended the total joint replacement education class.
- ☐ I have completed all the lab work requested from my surgeon's office.
- ☐ I will call my nurse navigator if I have questions or concerns about my surgery.
- ☐ I have talked to my nurse navigator or surgeon about discharge options.
- ☐ I have completed a Living Will or Health Care Power-of-Attorney to have on file in my chart.
- ☐ I have not shaved my legs 3 days before my surgery.
- ☐ I have arranged for someone to drive me home when I'm discharged from the hospital.
- ☐ I have arranged for someone to drive me to my follow-up appointments.

What to Bring to the Hospital

- ☐ Current list of medications and supplements, noting which ones have been stopped
- ☐ Loose pajamas or short nightgown and short robe if desired
- ☐ Under garments
- ☐ Loose shorts, jogging suit, sweats, tops
- ☐ Slippers with backs and rubberized sole or walking sneakers/shoes with Velcro® closures or elastic shoelaces
- ☐ Socks
- ☐ Personal toiletries (toothbrush, toothpaste, denture cleaner/cup, deodorant, electric or other razor, shaving cream, comb); do not bring powders
- ☐ Eyeglasses
- ☐ Hearing aid and batteries
- ☐ Cell phone and charging cable or calling card
- ☐ Drivers license or photo ID, insurance card, Medicare or Medicaid card
- ☐ Copy of your Advance Directives
- ☐ Important telephone numbers (include person bringing you home)
- ☐ Any hand-carry equipment you may have such as a reacher, sock aid, long-handled shoehorn
- ☐ This guide booklet so you can review items with your health care team
- ☐ Do not bring valuables—no jewelry, credit cards, checkbooks or cash
- ☐ Do not bring your own medications
- ☐ CPAP machine, if desired

The Day Before Surgery

You should receive a call from the surgeon's office the day before surgery to confirm your procedure and the time you need to arrive at the hospital.



PREPARING FOR SURGERY

Have a Support Person

Designate a support person to assist you at home. It is very important that you appoint someone to help care for you after the surgery for a few weeks. This person should be able to help you with daily living tasks and keep you safe. We at Dignity Health – Northridge Hospital want to partner in your well-being and are happy to provide you with a list of caregivers that you would be able to call at your own discretion and arrange for, if your loved ones aren't available.

Pre-Admission Testing

A pre-operative evaluation and medical clearance is mandatory for all joint replacement patients prior to surgery. Talk to your doctor.

Smoking Cessation

Smoking increases the risk of infection and blood clots after surgery. If you smoke, we encourage you to quit at least a few weeks before surgery.

Diet and Nutrition

Healthy eating and proper nutrition before your surgery aids the healing process.

- Drink plenty of fluids and stay hydrated.
- Eat foods high in fiber to aid in recovery.
- For guidance on the best food to eat, visit **eatright.org**.



PREPARING FOR SURGERY

Home Safety Preparation

Setting up your home for your return before you have surgery will help keep you safe, make your life easier and aid in your recovery. Listed below are suggestions for preparing your home for a safe recovery.



Traffic Pattern: Move obstacles—such as throw rugs, extension cords and footstools—out of your walkway. Create a wide, clear path from your bedroom to your bathroom and kitchen so you can easily move about with a walker or crutches.



Bathroom: Ask an occupational therapist how to adapt your bathroom to meet your needs during recovery. You may need an elevated toilet seat or commode and a shower chair.



Sitting: Sit in chairs that keep your knees lower than your hips. Choose a firm, straight-back chair with armrests. A dining room chair may work if you don't have other chairs. Add a foam cushion or folded blanket if you need to raise yourself up but avoid sitting on a soft pillow. Also, avoid sitting in rolling chairs or prolonged sitting in a recliner.



Children and Pets: Keep in mind that very young children and pets may pose a fall risk. Please consider a plan to ensure that you can safely move about your home.



Access to Items: To avoid reaching or bending, keep frequently used items within easy reach, especially in the kitchen, bathroom and bedroom. For example, food, medications and phone. It's a good idea to carry a cell phone or portable phone with you at all times during your recovery.



Stair Climbing: It's okay to climb stairs without assistance if you are able. However, you may need help with climbing stairs when you first get home. Consider installing handrails or make sure existing handrails are secure.



Laundry and Cleaning: Get help with cleaning and laundry. Have a few weeks of clean clothes available.



Meals: It's a good idea to stock up and have some meals prepared ahead of time. If you need meal assistance, please let your nurse navigator or care coordination team know.



Driving: Arrange for someone to drive you to your follow-up appointments. Do not drive until your surgeon gives you the all clear.



During Your Stay

Your surgery takes about one to three hours to complete. While you are in the operating room, your loved ones may wait in the surgical waiting room. The surgeon or representative will speak with your family while you are in the recovery room.

MyCare Text

Your loved ones will be able to get live updates on your care through MyCare Text. This provides peace of mind knowing they won't miss an important update from the surgical care team. If you want to utilize this service, please have your caregiver provide their text-enabled number to our nursing team.

Right After Surgery

You will recover in the Post-Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU) and be cared for by a nurse before being taken to your hospital room. The average time in this unit is about two hours.

Pain Management

Following your procedure, our pain management specialists will help to manage your pain on an as needed basis.

Fall Prevention: Your Safety Comes First

REMEMBER: Do not get out of your bed without assistance. Although getting up on the day of surgery aids in your recovery and helps prevent complications, you **MUST** not do so without assistance.



DURING YOUR STAY

In-Hospital Rehabilitation and Recovery Process

Physical and occupational therapies after your joint replacement surgery are critical parts of your recovery, as well as to help you regain range of motion and strength. We encourage you to get up for all three meals, go to the bathroom and get out of bed—all with assistance. You will continue to have therapy, and your activity level will be increased.

Physical and Occupational Therapy Evaluations

Physical therapy will see you the same day as your surgery; or if you have a later surgery time, the next morning for out-of-bed activities and mobilization. Your physical therapist will help you with:

- Assistive devices (e.g. front wheel walker, etc.)
- Exercises: A home exercise program during your stay; when you go home, you should plan to do exercises 3 times per day
- Activities of daily living

Preparing for Discharge

Discharge planning starts the moment you decide to have surgery. After your surgery, your care team will take the following steps to prepare you to go home:

- Provide progressive mobility and out of bed activities
- Advise on available durable medical equipment for home use
- Control pain by oral medication
- Discuss home health options or placement needs



At Home After Your Procedure

After surgery you can expect gradual improvement over the coming months. You should expect less pain, stiffness and swelling, and a more independent lifestyle.

Post Discharge Phone Call

Be assured that we will follow your care even after you are sent home with your loved ones. Our clinicians will call you within 24 to 48 hours to go over your care with you. Please ask them any health-related questions you might have so we can be active partners in your well-being. In addition, we also want to know about your hospital experience and how we can improve.

Visit by a Transitional Care Team Member—Free of Cost for You

The Transitional Care Program features dedicated nurse practitioners, physicians, pharmacists and social workers who are involved in the patient's continuum of care after discharge. Patients discharged to a participating skilled nursing facility will receive a weekly visit from a nurse practitioner. In addition, patients who are enrolled in the Transitional Care Program will also be contacted weekly for follow up after discharge. For those who need after-hours assistance, we offer a 24/7 emergency hotline, answered by qualified nurse practitioners. 818.885.3577.

However, it's important that you contact the surgeon's office or our hospital's 24/7 HOTLINE at 818.885.3577 if any of the following occur:

- You have increasing pain on the operative site.
- There is new or increased redness or warmth since discharge.
- There is new or increased drainage from your incision (how to care for your wound is included in your hospital discharge instructions).
- The operative site is increasingly swollen.
- Your calf becomes swollen, tender, warm or reddened.
- You have a temperature above 101 for more than 24 hours.
- For total knee replacement, your ability to flex (bend your knee) has decreased or remains the same as when you were discharged from the hospital.



AT HOME AFTER YOUR PROCEDURE

Home Health Care

- Home health therapy
- Physical therapy typically begins shortly after discharge
- Home health nursing

Activity

- Continue your exercise program and increase activity gradually; your goal is to regain strength and function.
- Follow all therapy instructions.
- Resume activity as you gain strength and confidence.
- You may experience discomfort in your operated hip or knee, and you may have difficulty sleeping at night. This is part of the recovery process. Getting up and moving around relieves some of the discomfort.
- You should climb stairs with support. Climb one step at a time—"good" leg up—"bad" leg down. Hold on to a railing, if available.
- You may be a passenger in a car. If you find the seat is too low or difficult to stand up from, use a firm cushion or folded blanket to raise the height.
- You may not drive before your first post-op visit. The decision to resume driving your vehicle is made by your surgeon.
- Do not lift anything heavy after surgery.

Icing and Elevation

After a joint replacement, swelling is expected. Swelling can cause increased pain and limit your range of motion, so taking steps to reduce the swelling is important. Continue using ice packs or some form of cold therapy to help reduce swelling. For knee replacement, you may use pillows to elevate. It is important to elevate the entire leg down to the ankle; avoid resting with the knee slightly bent for prolonged periods.



AT HOME AFTER YOUR PROCEDURE

Potential Complications

Blood Clots: Blood clots are potential complications following hip or knee joint replacement surgery. A blood clot from your leg can travel to your lungs and cause serious health complications. Preventing a blood clot from forming is the best treatment method. You can lower your risk of developing a blood clot by:

- Exercising and staying active
- Taking blood thinners, such as aspirin, warfarin (Coumadin®), Lovenox, Xarelto or other drugs
- Wearing support stockings

The symptoms of a blood clot include:

- Pain and/or redness in your calf and leg unrelated to your incision
- Increased swelling of your thigh, calf, ankle or foot
- Increased skin temperature at the site of the incision
- Shortness of breath and chest pain or pain when breathing

Surgical Site Infection: A surgical site infection is an infection that occurs after surgery in the part of the body where the surgery took place. Most patients who have surgery do not develop an infection. Some common symptoms of surgical site infection include:

- Increased redness and pain around the area where you had surgery
- Any drainage, in particular, cloudy fluid from your surgical wound
- Fever

If any of these symptoms occur, contact your surgeon's office or our Transitional Care 24/7 Hotline immediately.

Preventing Infection

Preventing infection is extremely important for the rest of your life. Your new joint is artificial and does not have your body's natural protection against infection. It is possible to develop an infection in your artificial joint if antibiotics are not taken before dental and other invasive procedures.

Thank you for choosing Northridge Hospital Medical Center for your joint replacement surgery. For questions or inquiries, please call your surgeon. If you have any concerns post discharge, please call your nurse navigator or our Transitional Care Hotline, 24/7.

