

Clinical Protocol

Patient Discharge Advice Sheet

Hip and Knee Joint Replacement

Points to consider before coming to hospital

- If you live alone, it would be advisable to have a friend or relative to visit daily for the first week or alternatively go and stay with a friend or relative during initial convalescence.
- If you live in a house, it is advisable to have a bed downstairs. If there is no toilet downstairs, you could have a commode.
- Help may be required from Social Services e.g. Home Help or Meals on Wheels, so please make early contact with your local office.
- **Shopping** – Stock up, as you will not be able to drive for 6 – 8 weeks and also unable to carry shopping bags
- You may need a raised toilet seat (4 inch raise) fitted over normal toilet. You may also need a Helping Hand and a long shoehorn; all may be purchased or loaned from a local Red Cross Office.

Points to remember after discharge

- Follow the advice on using crutches, walking frame or canes to support during walking. Follow the exercise programme especially after knee replacement.
- For the first 8 weeks after hip replacement, you should not bend to pick up things from the floor, tie your shoe laces, pull on socks or cut your toe nails.
- Keep your wound dressings clean and dry until the wound clips are removed. In the meantime, use strip washes
- **Sitting** – Avoid sitting for more than 30 minutes at a time. Do not cross your legs. It is preferable if you sit with your knees 5 – 10 inches apart. Sit on a high chair that will keep your hips at a slightly higher level than your knees. Chairs with armrests are preferred.
- **Sleeping** – During the first 6 weeks, you should lie on your back with a pillow between your legs. Sex may usually be resumed after 8 weeks but avoid positions with extreme bending of the joints.

- **Sitting in a car** – As a passenger, ensure that the seat is fully pushed back. First lower yourself onto the seat allowing it to support you. Then slide backwards and in a semi-circling position bring your legs around into the car.
- **Home Safety** – Become more aware of potential hazards at home by removing throw rugs or loose electric cables. Watch for small pets or objects on the floor. Be careful of wet or uneven floors. Always think before you move.
- Always avoid crossing your legs when sitting or laying down.
- Contact the Hospital or your doctor if you experience increasing pain, redness or swelling around the incision or if you develop a fever.