

## **Getting ready for your joint replacement surgery**

Joint replacement surgery, either of the hip or the knee, is considered a major orthopaedic surgical procedure. Just as in any other minor or major surgical procedure risks and complications do exist. However, we want to reassure our patients that, in expert hands, this procedure will have a highly successful outcome with a very low complication rate.

The main goal of joint replacement surgery is to relieve pain and to regain joint movement and function so that patients can return to all regular daily activities that were discontinued due to hip or knee pain. Thanks to joint replacement surgery you will be able to enjoy painless daily living and better your quality of life.

If you and your orthopaedic surgeon have decided that you are an appropriate candidate for hip or knee replacement surgery, you will need a few weeks to get ready for surgery not only physically but mentally.

You have to make sure that you know all about what to expect before, during and after surgery. You have to ask all the questions that come to mind: what is the hospital admission process? how long will your hospital stay be? what kind of anaesthesia will be given to you?, which kind of implant will be used? are you going to need rehab after surgery? medications? recovery time? etc.

If you have medical insurance, find out what costs are covered by your insurance company and plan, and what are the costs that won't be covered by your insurance company and will be covered by you. Keep on hand all your medical records and medical history, you may feel that you are answering the same questions repeatedly but it's all necessary to prevent setbacks.

Be sure to have the following information on hand at all times:

Before surgery you have to determine which family member or friend will be the spokesperson between physician and family. This is the best way to prevent cross information and misinformation between family members.

You have to carry a list of all doctors that are treating you including their phone numbers, and the reason you are seeing them.

You have to carry a list of all medications you are currently taking including dosage and schedule.

### **Be in shape for your surgery:**

Remember that while joint replacement surgery is considered major surgery and you have to prepare for it physically and mentally, most of our recommendations are just common sense:

- If you smoke, stop smoking

- Procure a healthy and balanced diet , eat plenty of fruit, vegetables, fish, chicken, nuts, almonds, whole grain bread, etc. Combine food from all three groups (sugars, proteins and fat). If you are overweight, a visit to a nutritionist may be a good idea.
- Exercise. Ask your doctor for a specific exercise program used for patients suffering from hip or knee arthrosis. It is important to exercise before surgery as postsurgery your muscles will be strong enough to start walking and rehab.
- Ask your doctor about the proper way to use walking aids such as canes, crutches or walkers.

### **Prepare beforehand for your hospital discharge and your return home:**

For the first one or two weeks you'll be needing help from some family member or friend who will help you with your basic needs such as food, bathing, personal hygiene, getting dressed and undressed, etc. If possible you should have some frozen food stored in the freezer before surgery to make it easier on your family or friend.

Ask your doctor if you'll be needing special aids and modifications in your home after surgery so you'll feel more comfortable and safe at home. For example it may be better to adapt the family room as your bedroom if the family room is at ground level and your room is on the upper floor. It is best if you have a full bathroom close by your bedroom.

We usually recommend the use of a toilet extension to make the seat higher. This is only necessary during the first three months. During the first two weeks we recommend that you not shower by yourself. You will need the assistance of one or two persons - be sure to place a shower mat and a strong plastic chair inside the shower area, the use of sandals is recommended during shower, we do not recommend the use of bathtubs.

Some people may feel more comfortable installing bathroom handles next to the toilet and shower. This should always be planned before the surgery.

Secure all rugs in your house, secure all loose cables that cross living quarters. If there are children in the house be sure that they don't leave toys scattered on the floor or ground.

Have everything that you need close at hand: medications, water, glasses, phone, your doctor's phone number, and plan beforehand the activities that you will be doing during these first couple of weeks after surgery : reading, knitting, t.v., music, sewing, studying, painting, etc.

We recommend that you try and obtain a recliner chair as you are most likely going to be spending most of the day in it the first couple of weeks.

### **Last minute preparations:**

The day before surgery it is normal to feel nervous. At all times you must remember that we are also thinking of you and that everything has been

carefully planned. We recommend that you take enough time to go over all our indications so nothing is forgotten.

- Take a warm shower the night before surgery. This will help to clean your skin and diminishes the risk of infection.
- Do not shave the surgical area (hip or knee). If it's necessary, it will be taken care of by your physician.
- Do not use makeup, lipstick, nail polish or false nails.
- Do not eat or drink anything after midnight the day before surgery. Remember that you need at least 8 hours of fasting before surgery.
- Prepare a suitcase with all necessary personal items such as toothpaste, toothbrush, hairbrush, slippers, bathroom sandals, nightgown, bathroom gown, pyjamas, glasses, something to read, copy of your insurance policy, daily medications, dentures (if used), shampoo, body lotion, deodorant, shaving kit, baby wet towels, and the clothes that you will be wearing once you are discharged from the hospital. (we recommend a t-shirt, track pants and tennis shoes or crocks)
- We recommend not to bring any valuable items like watches and any kind of jewellery.
- Make sure to bring all x rays, special studies and lab tests. Do not forget the hospital order.

**Remember that your surgery was planned with sufficient time. Sleep peacefully as we are sure that your hip or knee replacement surgery will be a satisfactory experience, and don't forget we are here to help you.**

Dr. Stefan Martínez van Gils & Dr. Isaac Cervantes.

**NOTE: The main reason for the above information is to aid patients. We are not responsible for the decisions made by patients without previously consulting their attending physician.**