



### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS TO TOTAL JOINT SURGERY

Q: How do I get prepared at home for my surgery?

A: Complete the “Home Safety Checklist” provided in your Memorial Health System Packet (this will be reviewed by our Orthopedic Nurse Coordinator).

Please refill any current prescriptions that are becoming low, prior to your surgery.

\*\*\*\* PLEASE CALL (1-888-805-2649), WE WILL SCHEDULE YOU FOR PRE-REGISTERING AND ALSO FOR YOUR VISIT WITH THE ORTHOPEDIC COORDINATOR.\*\*\*\*

Q: What should I do if I live alone and do not have any family?

A: Your mobility and independence will be compromised following surgery; therefore, you will need assistance. You may want to consider temporarily staying in a nursing care facility or applying for home health care services. Memorial Health System of East Texas can provide you with a list of area nursing care facilities and agencies. However, you will need to visit the facilities or representatives from nursing care agencies prior to your surgery and determine which one is most appropriate for your needs.

Q: What will be accomplished during the pre-admission phase?

A: After you complete the necessary paperwork for admission to the hospital, you will undergo X-Rays, laboratory tests, and an EKG. Additionally, you will meet the Orthopedic Clinical Nurse Coordinator who will educate you on what to expect before, during, and after surgery. You also will have the opportunity to view an educational video on the procedure. Lastly, you will have the opportunity to visit with the Anesthesiologist so that he/she will be able to answer any questions that you may have prior to surgery. Good understanding about your surgery will help you significantly in your recovery and prevention of complications.

Q: What do I need for pre-admission?

A: You should bring all papers given to you by your surgeon. This includes pre-op orders and instructions. Also, you will need:

- Financial and/or Medical Power of Attorney
- The “Passport to Travel” folder
- Prescription medications with all original dosage information (name of medication, medication strength, and how often it is taken). Also, please list any vitamins, special vitamin juices, herbs, or any aspirin containing products as this information is given to anesthesia.
- Insurance information, credit cards, debit cards, or checks to cover your insurance deductible
- Drivers license
- Any questions you have concerning the procedure
- If you are receiving home health services prior to admission, please bring the name and phone number of the company you are using

Q: What is included in the, “Memorial Orthopedic Packet?”

A: The Orthopedic pass, a valet parking permit, a “Home Safety Checklist”, and the “Question and Answer” sheet are included in the Memorial Orthopedic Packet.

Q: What are the risks of my surgery?

A: Blood clots, bleeding or infection are the primary risks of surgery. To avoid these risks, we use antibiotics and blood thinners. We also take special precautions in the operating room to prevent infections.

Q: What do I need to bring on the day of surgery?

A: Before leaving for surgery, you are encouraged to shower using an antibacterial soap. Also be sure to pack personal items such as: make-up, eyeglasses, toothbrush/toothpaste, denture cleaning supplies, hairbrush, gown/robe or loose fitting pajamas, undergarments, favorite pillow (or other sleeping enhancers), non-slip slippers, crutches and/or walker, books to read, puzzles, etc. It also is a good idea to bring important phone numbers.

Bring loose fitting clothes for the trip home, as well as slip on shoes (it will be hard to bend over to tie laces).

\*\*\*\*PLEASE LEAVE THESE ITEMS IN YOUR VEHICLE UNTIL AFTER SURGERY.

IMPORTANT: You may wear your dentures. If spinal is the choice of anesthesia, we want dentures to be left in for better breathing ability. If general is the choice of anesthesia, a denture cup will be supplied by Memorial for protecting dentures and this cup/dentures will be given to your family.

\*\*\*PLEASE DO NOT BRING large amounts of cash, credit cards, jewelry, or any other valuables.

Q: What can I eat or drink on the morning of surgery?

A: It is important that you do not eat or drink after midnight the night before your surgery. This also

includes gum and breath lozenges. However, you may have a SIP of water with your blood pressure medication that morning.

Q: How long will my surgery last?

A: Your procedure will last anywhere from 2 - 4 hours, depending on the type of procedure and any pre-existing joint conditions.

Q: What are implants and what are they made of?

A: Implants are a substitution joint made from either Cobalt Chrome or Titanium, (depending on implant), and a high density polyethylene piece that is inserted between the two metal parts. \*\*\*They will set off metal detectors in airports, just inform security.

Q: Where does my family wait during my surgery?

A: The family can wait anywhere within the hospital. A pager will be assigned to the family, so your loved ones do not feel confined to waiting areas. When the pager sounds, this is an indication that a call from surgery will occur in the Day Surgery waiting room. The Day Surgery waiting area is located beside the vending machine/coffee bar.

Q: What happens after surgery?

A: Following surgery, you will be taken to the recovery room and closely observed for at least 1 hour. You will have a Foley (which will drain your bladder), and you may also have a drain coming from the surgery site. After the recovery phase, you will be taken to your room.

Q: What happens after I arrive at my room?

A: You will be closely monitored by our nursing staff. Physical therapy will start the same day of surgery or the following day depending on your surgeon. Pain medication will be given prior to any physical therapy to minimize any discomfort. Your surgeon has ordered medication to effectively relieve your pain. Please inform the nurses if this is not adequate. Our goal is to manage your pain well so that you can perform the necessary activities required as part of your therapy.

Q: How long will I be in the hospital after my surgery?

A: You will hospitalized anywhere from 3 -5 days for total knee replacements and 5-7 days for total hip replacements. These timelines depend on any pre-existing health conditions, any rare surgery complications, and your independence with mobility prior to surgery.

Q: What happens after I go home?

A: Follow the instructions given to you by your surgeon and hospital treatment team.

- Use walker/crutches as instructed.
- If you received a knee replacement, get plenty of rest and remember to ice your knee incision

site as instructed by the staff.

- Avoid any strenuous work, driving, mopping, sweeping/vacuuming, and other housework until your surgeon has released you to do so.
- You will need to eat right to promote healing and drink plenty of fluids to prevent constipation.
- It is important that you contact your surgeon if you notice a rise in your temperature or an increase in pain.
- Continue to do your home exercises as instructed by your therapists.
- If therapy has been ordered for you upon discharge (home health or op), make sure and follow up with the facility.
- Be sure to continue taking post surgical prescribed medications as indicated, blood thinners, etc.
- Don't get discouraged. Remember recovery can take up to 2-3 months.
- It is very important that you inform your doctor in the future of any invasive procedures such as dental work, colonoscopy, etc.. Bacteria can enter the blood stream and infect the implant.

**Q: What exercises can I do after the surgeon releases me?**

**A: You should continue to do the home exercise program that your therapist taught you in the hospital. If outpatient or home health therapy services were recommended at discharge, your therapists will progress your exercises according to your healing, and to any post operative pre-condition.**

**REMEMBER THAT RESUMING STRENUOUS EXERCISE PROGRAMS WILL NEED TO BE CLEARED BY YOUR SURGEON AND TYPICALLY CAN NOT BE STARTED FOR THE FIRST 3-4 MONTHS AFTER YOUR OPERATION. CHECK WITH YOUR DOCTOR BEFORE STARTING MORE AGGRESSIVE EXERCISE.**

**Q: What if I have additional questions?**

**A: As part of our service to you, please call our Orthopedic Clinical Nurse Coordinator toll free at 1-888-805-2649.**