



Sacheen H. Mehta, M.D.

Orthopaedic Surgery, *Board-Certified*
Sports Medicine, *Board-Certified*

TOTAL JOINT REPLACEMENT

What to Expect AFTER Surgery

- ◆ **WALKING:** Walking aids such as a crutches or walker usually are required for 1-3 weeks following the surgery. Some patients may then require a cane for a short time.
- ◆ **TED HOSE:** Elastic support stockings are required on both legs during the daytime for 4 weeks following surgery to control swelling and help prevent blood clots. They may be removed at night.
- ◆ **PHYSICAL THERAPY AND EXERCISES:** Physical therapy will be prescribed at an outpatient therapy center 2-3 times / week until optimal motion, leg strength, and normal walking are achieved. Your therapist will give you a daily home exercise program. Consistent exercise is the key to success in joint replacement surgery.
- ◆ **SHOWERING:** The surgical wound must stay clean and dry for 2 weeks following the surgery. After suture removal at 2 weeks, if the wound is completely closed with no drainage, you may shower.
- ◆ **DRIVING:** Driving is generally permitted 2-3 weeks after surgery ONLY if narcotic pain medications are no longer being used and you are confident in your ability to control your vehicle.
- ◆ **AIRLINE TRAVEL:** Airline travel is not recommended for 3 weeks following surgery. Your implants may require you to undergo additional screening measures at the airport security checkpoints. This is standard procedure and you will not need to carry proof of your surgery.
- ◆ **PREVENTATIVE ANTIBIOTICS:** As a lifelong precaution, a dose of antibiotics is recommended before all invasive procedures such as dental procedures, urinary tract or vaginal procedures. Your dentist, urologist, OB/GYN should be able to provide that prescription.



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◆ MEDICATIONS:

- a) Blood Thinner: Most patients will be instructed to take **enteric-coated aspirin 325 mg (over-the-counter) daily for 6 weeks** as a blood thinner. This is critically important. **DO NOT SUBSTITUTE** any other over-the-counter medications for aspirin. Some high risk patients will be given a prescription for a stronger blood thinning medication.
- b) Pain medications: You will be given a prescription for Norco or other similar narcotic medication for pain after surgery. Narcotic pain medications usually are required for just a few weeks following surgery. This medication will also help you make progress in physical therapy.
- c) Multivitamin: **One standard multivitamin (over-the-counter) per day for 6 weeks** is recommended to help ensure proper nutrition for wound healing. This is not a substitute for proper diet, rather it is a supplement.
- d) Iron: **Feosol tablets (over-the-counter) taken twice daily with food for 6 weeks** is recommended to help make new blood.
- e) Stool softener: **Colace 100 mg (over-the-counter) twice daily** may be needed to prevent constipation. Constipation is a common side effect of narcotic pain medications and iron tablets. You may reduce the dose of iron to once daily if necessary.
- f) You may resume your other routine medications as instructed.

◆ RETURN APPOINTMENTS: You will need to see Dr. Mehta for follow up visits according to the following general schedule:

- a) **2 weeks** after the surgery date for staple removal and follow up
- b) **6 weeks** after the surgery date for X-rays and follow up
- c) **3 months, 12 months** after the surgery date for follow up.
- d) After that, **yearly** checks with X-rays are required.

CONGRATULATIONS on your decision to improve your quality of life!

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