Points To Remember About Hip Replacement Surgery

- Hip replacement surgery removes damaged or diseased parts of a hip joint and replaces them with new, artificial parts.
- The goals of hip replacement surgery are to relieve pain, help the hip joint work better, and help you move better.
- Hip replacement may be needed because of diseases such as osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, or osteonecrosis, or because of broken bones from trauma or disease.
- Getting ready for surgery begins several weeks or more before the surgery. You can do many things to prepare yourself and your home for life after surgery.
- How long it takes you to recover from surgery depends on several factors, including your overall health. After returning home, it is important to take steps to prevent falls.

What is hip replacement surgery?

Hip replacement surgery is a procedure in which a surgeon makes an incision over the side of the thigh, removes the diseased parts of the hip joint, and replaces them with new, artificial parts. These parts mimic the way a normal hip joint works. The pieces may be made of metal, plastic, ceramic, or a combination of these materials.

The goals of hip replacement surgery include:

- Relieve pain from the damaged or diseased hip joint.
- Improve the way the hip joint works.
- Help you move better.

During a hip replacement, the surgeon tries to use the smallest incision possible to limit the amount of injury to the soft tissue and bone.

Why do people need hip replacement surgery?
Hip replacement surgery is usually needed to repair damage to the hip joint from:

- **Osteoarthritis.**
- **Rheumatoid arthritis.**
- **Osteonecrosis.**
- Injuries or broken bones from trauma or disease.

Your doctor may recommend that you try other treatments before having hip replacement surgery, including:

- Pain medications.
- Physical therapy and exercise programs.
- Activity changes to limit strain on your hip.
- Assistive devices such as a cane, crutch, or walker.

You and your doctor will determine the best treatment for you, depending on your health history and the risks associated with the surgery.

**How do I prepare for hip replacement surgery?**

Getting ready for hip replacement surgery begins several weeks or more before the actual surgery. Being as healthy as possible before your surgery can help you recover. Here are some things you can do to help you prepare for surgery and recovery:

- Speak with your surgeon and other health care team members about what to expect. Request written information when possible so that you can review it later if needed.
- Ask your surgeon about exercises you can do before surgery to help you get stronger.
- If you smoke, try to quit or cut back.
- If you are overweight, try to lose weight. Being overweight can increase the chance of having problems during or after surgery.
- Set up transportation for your surgery and any follow-up visits.
- Ask for help around the house for a week or two after coming home. This may include help with cooking, shopping, and laundry.
- Make meals in advance.
- Set up an area in your home where you will spend most of your time recovering. You may want to:
  - Keep the television remote control, telephone, cell phone, medicine, tissues, and wastebasket close by.
  - Place other items you use every day at arm’s level so you can easily reach them.
Wear an apron with pockets for carrying things around the house. This leaves hands and arms free for balance or to use crutches.

Use a long-handled “reacher” to turn on lights or grab things that are beyond arm’s length.

- Speak to your health care team about equipment that may help with daily activities such as:
  - Safety bars in the bathroom.
  - Raised toilet seat.
  - Shower chair or bench to use during bathing.
  - Devices to help you move around, such as a walker or crutches.

What happens during hip replacement surgery?

During hip replacement:

- You will receive anesthesia to keep you comfortable and pain free during the surgery. The type of anesthesia you get depends on your health history and the medicines you take.
- Your surgeon will make an incision over the hip. The size of the incision will vary depending on many factors, including your size and your surgeon’s preferences.
- Your surgeon will remove the diseased bone tissue and cartilage from the hip joint, and insert the new, artificial parts.
- You will be moved to the recovery room after surgery.

What can I expect after hip replacement surgery?

How long you stay in the hospital or surgical center after your surgery depends on many factors, including your overall health. Some people may go home the same day, while others stay in the hospital. These are some common steps in recovery.

- If you need extra time and therapy to recover, your health care team may recommend that you spend some time in a rehabilitation or skilled nursing care facility.
- Everyone who has hip replacement surgery learns exercises to strengthen the hip and how to move around safely.
- Whether you stay at the hospital, go home the same day, or transfer to another facility, your health care team will give you instructions to follow once you are home.
How quickly and how fully you recover from hip replacement surgery varies from person to person. This depends on many factors, such as your overall health and fitness level before surgery. For many people, much of their recovery happens in the first 2 months after surgery. However, it is important to know that full recovery continues as you get stronger and more active over the next year after surgery.

Your health care team can provide advice on when you can start to participate in more demanding activities.

**Life after hip replacement surgery**

Most people who have hip replacement surgery experience:

- Less pain.
- Better ability to move.
- Improvements in activities of daily living and quality of life.

Talk to your doctor about exercises that can help increase muscle strength and physical fitness without injuring the new hip.

Most doctors recommend avoiding high-impact activities, such as basketball, jogging, and vigorous tennis. These activities may lead to excessive wear of the new hip or cause loosening of its parts.

Remember to take precautions to avoid falls and injuries. Here are some tips to help prevent falls outdoors and when you are away from home:

- Use a cane or walker if needed.
- Wear shoes that provide support and have thin nonslip soles.
- Walk on grass when sidewalks are slippery; in winter, put salt, sand, or kitty litter on icy sidewalks.
- Stop at curbs and check their height before stepping up or down.

Some ways to help prevent falls indoors are:

- Keep rooms free of clutter, especially on floors. Avoid running electrical cords across walking areas.
- Use plastic or carpet runners on slippery floors.
- Wear shoes, even when indoors, that provide support and have thin nonslip soles. Avoid wearing slippers and athletic shoes with deep treads.
- If you have a pet, watch where they are to avoid tripping over them.
- Do not walk in socks, stockings, or slippers.
• Be careful on polished floors that are slick and dangerous, especially when wet, and walk on plastic or carpet runners when possible.
• Be sure carpets and area rugs have skid-proof backing or are tacked to the floor. Use double-stick tape to keep rugs from slipping.
• Be sure stairs are well lit and have rails on both sides.
• Install grab bars on bathroom walls near the tub, shower, and toilet.
• Use a rubber bathmat or slip-proof seat in the shower or tub.
• Use nightlights or keep a flashlight next to your bed in case you need to get up at night.
• Add more lights in rooms. Install ceiling fixtures or lamps that can be turned on by a switch near the door.
• Use a sturdy stepstool with a handrail and wide steps.
• Keep a cordless phone or cell phone with you so that you do not have to rush to the phone when it rings. In addition, if you fall, you can call for help.
• Consider having a personal emergency-response system; you can use it to call for help if you fall.

For more info

U.S. Food and Drug Administration
Toll free: 888-INFO-FDA (888-463-6332)
Website: https://www.fda.gov

Drugs@FDA at https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cder/daf. Drugs@FDA is a searchable catalog of FDA-approved drug products.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics
Website: https://www.cdc.gov/nchs

American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons
Website: https://www.aaos.org

American Physical Therapy Association
Website: https://www.apta.org

Arthritis Foundation
Website: https://www.arthritis.org

The Hip Society
Website: https://www.hipsoc.org/hipsoc
If you need more information about available resources in your language or other languages, please visit our webpages below or contact the NIAMS Information Clearinghouse at NIAMSInfo@mail.nih.gov.

- Asian Language Health Information
- Spanish Language Health Information