



Sacheen H. Mehta, M.D.

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

TOTAL JOINT REPLACEMENT

What to Expect AFTER Surgery

- ◆ **WALKING:** Walking aids such as a crutches or walker usually are required for 3-6 weeks following the surgery. Some patients may then require a cane until the limp is gone.
- ◆ **TED HOSE:** Elastic support stockings are required on both legs during the daytime for 4 weeks following surgery. 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 walking are achieved. In addition a daily home exercise program will be prescribed by your therapist. Consistent exercise is the key to success in joint replacement surgery.
- ◆ **SHOWERING:** The surgical wound must stay clean and dry for 3 weeks following the surgery. After 3 weeks if the wound is completely closed with no drainage, you may shower.
- ◆ **DRIVING:** Driving a car is generally permitted 3-4 weeks after surgery ONLY if narcotic pain medications are no longer being used.
- ◆ **AIRLINE TRAVEL:** You will receive a card verifying joint replacement surgery with metal implants for easier passage through airport security. Please ask Dr. Mehta if you do not receive the card at your first office visit following surgery.
Airline travel is not recommended for 6 weeks following 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, and all gastrointestinal tract procedures (including colonoscopy, flexible sigmoidoscopy, rectal surgery, etc).

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◆ MEDICATIONS:

- a) Coumadin: You **will require Coumadin for 3 weeks following surgery**. Dr. Mehta will adjust your Coumadin dosage. **Blood thinning levels are to be checked every Monday and Thursday** after discharge. If your dosage needs to be adjusted, Dr. Mehta's office will contact you.
- b) Pain medications: Narcotic pain medications usually are required for 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 three times 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.
- f) You may resume your other routine medications as instructed by Dr. Mehta.

◆ 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, 6 months, 12 months** after the surgery date for follow up.
- d) After that, **yearly** checks with X-rays are required.