

Department of Orthopaedic Surgery

Total Joint Replacement Information Sheet

- Total joint replacement is one of the most commonly performed operations in the US. We, at the Baton Rouge Orthopaedic Clinic, will try to give you the best possible care.
- You will be admitted to the hospital after surgery. You can expect to be in the hospital at least 2 days. You will need to bring personal items including all medications taken at home.
- After surgery you will have physical therapy 2x day. The first day it will be in your hospital room. The second day you will go to the Physical Therapy department by wheelchair. And you will continue the exercises learned in the hospital once you are home with Home Health.
- You will be discharged approximately 2 days after surgery. If there is any medical reason why you cannot leave, you may stay as long as necessary. Some patients may need to go to a rehabilitation hospital for further physical therapy.
- Possible Complications:
 - **Infection:** There is a very low risk of developing an infection in your total joint replacement. However, we do everything possible to prevent this/. You will receive antibiotics before and after surgery. *It is important to remember before you have any dental work or other invasive procedure you will be required to take antibiotics. Further instruction will be given at time of discharge.
 - **Blood Loss** – Every operation causes blood loss and joint replacement surgery is a major operation. Sometimes it may be necessary to have a blood transfusion. However, new medications and surgical advances make this a very rare occurrence.
 - **Nerve Damage:** Occasionally nerves may be damaged or irritated from the surgery. These conditions usually resolve with time.
 - **Blood Clots:** Blood clots in the leg can occur after joint replacement surgery. These can travel to the lung and cause “pulmonary embolus”. While in the hospital you will be given a blood thinner medication and special stockings to greatly decrease the chance of blood clot. Once discharged from the hospital, if not already taking a blood thinner you will be asked to take a baby aspirin once a day x 1 month.
 - **Dislocations:** The first 6 weeks after a hip replacement, the hip is vulnerable to dislocation. While in the hospital you will be taught precautions to avoid this for this time period.
 - **Pain:** A Joint replacement operation is normally painful. However, with modern-day anesthesia and pain medications, we are able to keep a majority of our patients quite comfortable throughout their hospital stay and beyond.