

## **Discharge Instructions: Anterior Approach Total Hip Replacement**

### **Icing / Cryotherapy**

Using ice after surgery reduces pain, improves sleep, and can decrease the need for pain medications. You may use anything from a basic ice pack to a cold therapy machine.

- **Frequency:** Ice the hip for 20–30 minutes every hour as needed, especially during the first 48 hours after surgery.
- **Skin Protection:** Always place a thin cloth (like a T-shirt) between your skin and the ice source to avoid frostbite.
- **Skin Safety:** Check your skin every 10 minutes during icing. Stop immediately if you notice increased pain, burning, blisters, redness, discoloration, or other skin changes.

### **Dressing Care**

You will leave the hospital with a special dressing over your incision.

- **Do not remove the dressing** unless instructed by your care team.
- **Keep the incision clean and dry** until your follow-up appointment.

If your abdomen or lower belly rests on your upper thigh while sitting, it is very important to **keep the area between the skin and the incision dry**.

- To prevent moisture buildup, place a clean, dry **4x4 gauze pad or ABD pad** between your incision and the overlying skin when sitting.
- Change the pad regularly to keep the area clean and dry. This helps prevent irritation, skin breakdown, or infection.

### **Swelling**

Swelling and bruising of the leg are normal and will gradually improve.

- Elevate your leg frequently in the first few days after surgery to help reduce swelling and speed up recovery.

### **Walking / Weight Bearing**

Unless told otherwise, you may put full weight on your operated leg.

- You will likely need a walker, cane, or crutches for support.
- Gradually increase how much weight you place on your leg as your pain decreases and strength returns.

### **Bathing / Showering**

- **Keep your incision dry** until your follow-up appointment.
- **No tub bathing, swimming, or soaking** until cleared by your doctor.

### **Driving**

You may resume driving when:

- You are off all narcotic pain medications.
- Your leg is pain-free.
- You can walk normally and safely control the vehicle.

This usually occurs **2–4 weeks after surgery** for most patients.

### **Medications**

You will likely be prescribed a narcotic pain medication.

- **Use only as needed** and follow dosage instructions closely.
- These medications can cause **constipation**. Drink plenty of fluids and eat high-fiber foods.
- **Do not drive, operate machinery, or consume alcohol** while taking narcotic medications.



### **TED Hose / Compression Stockings**

To reduce leg and foot swelling, wear your compression stockings (TED hose) daily until your follow-up appointment.

- You may remove them for comfort or washing.
- Try to wear them as much as possible throughout the day.

### **Blood Clot Prevention**

- Take **aspirin 81 mg** twice daily (typically with breakfast and dinner) for **1 month after surgery**, unless prescribed a different blood thinner.
- **Movement is essential:** avoid long periods of sitting or lying still.

### **For the first 10 days after surgery:**

- Limit sitting to 30 minutes at a time, 3–4 times a day.
- Spend most non-walking time lying down with legs elevated.
- Perform **ankle pumps** regularly to promote circulation and prevent blood clots.
- Gradually increase time sitting up and being out of bed as tolerated.

### **When to Call Your Surgeon**

Contact Dr. Grutter's office immediately if you notice:

- Fever of **101.5°F or higher**
- Chills
- Increasing pain, redness, or warmth around the incision
- Persistent or increased pain
- Unusual or excessive bleeding (a small amount of drainage is normal)

### **Emergency Warning Signs**

Go to the **emergency room immediately** if you experience:

- **Chest pain**
- **Shortness of breath**

These symptoms could indicate a life-threatening blood clot or pulmonary embolism.

### **Follow-Up Appointment**

You should have a follow-up appointment scheduled with **Dr. Grutter 14 days** after surgery.

If you do not have an appointment, **please call the office** as soon as you get home to schedule one.