



ORTHOPAEDIC
& SPINE CENTER
Open MRI Center



THE RECOVERY PROCESS

PART 1

This information will help you get ready for your surgery AND prepare for the days, weeks, and months following your surgery. You may need to adjust your work schedule, ask friends or family to help you around the house, and find time for ongoing physical therapy. Each case is unique and your own commitment to rehabilitation and recovery will accelerate the process and improve your outcome.



Preparing for Recovery before Surgery

The Orthopaedic Surgeons at OSC recommend a pre-operative wellness program for our surgical patients to get them into the best physical shape possible before they go into the operating room. Even if this program can be done for only a week or two, it can have tremendous benefits for the patient. Recommendations are as follows:



Quit smoking completely or greatly reduce the amount you smoke



Eat healthy, nutritious foods



Limit junk food and soda



Limit Alcohol consumption



Do prescribed exercises to build strength for recovery



Have any dental problems fixed before surgery



Take a good multi-vitamin with minerals



Attend Joint Replacement Classes at the Hospital



Read all informational materials about your surgery



Limit contact with individuals who are sick

Preparing Your Home/Life for Recovery

Your home is where you will spend most of your recovery time. Make sure it is safe, comfortable and prepared for your recovery **before** you have surgery.

- 1.) Purchase or prepare foods that can be frozen and fixed easily by caregivers during your recovery
- 2.) Stock up on the beverages, soft foods and other comfort items you will want on hand
 - a.) Throat lozenges or spray for sore throat after anesthesia or cervical procedures
 - b.) Personal Hygiene wipes
 - c.) Stool softeners or laxatives for pain medication-induced constipation
 - d.) Refillable or reusable ice packs for pain control
 - e.) Comfortable, easily removable clothing, like sweatpants and shirts
- 3.) Move furniture to allow for easy access of wheelchairs, walkers and canes
- 4.) Remove throw rugs and other items that could cause a fall
- 5.) Purchase elevated commode seat, walker or other assistive devices if recommended
- 6.) Purchase a shower chair or bench or non-skid mats for the tub
- 7.) Have designated family members or friends help you for several days after surgery
- 8.) Pay bills, take care of the lawn, pet care, childcare arrangements, garbage pickup, etc. so that you won't have to worry about it during the first few days/weeks of recovery
- 9.) Take care of legal affairs, living wills, advanced directives, etc
- 10.) Arrange transportation home from the hospital



7-14

Stop taking certain medications, such as anti-inflammatories, 7-14 days before surgery. Your physician will advise you.

General Surgical Recovery Guidelines

Pain Management During and Post Surgery



Helping patients reduce or eliminate post-surgical pain is an important aspect of any surgical recovery. While you are in surgery and in recovery, great care will be taken to see that your pain is well-managed. Patients will be given IV pain medication, muscle relaxants and may be given other drugs which help nerve pain or anxiety, which may continue while they remain inpatient at the hospital. The drug "cocktails" have proven to be more effective than high-doses of narcotics at relieving pain in surgical patients.



Joint Replacement - Because knee replacement patients will typically experience more post-surgical pain than hip replacement patients, they may also receive injections of numbing medication at the surgical site. The physician may also choose to place a catheter in place that releases pain medication at the nerve root of the surgical site for several days. Hip Replacement patients typically do not experience a great deal of post-surgical pain



Spine Surgery - Upon discharge, patients who are recovering from spine surgery will be given oral pain medication and/or muscle relaxers to take at home during the recovery period, if needed. Many patients are surprised to find that the surgery has helped to greatly

relieve their pain and find that they do not need to take much pain medication after the first few days post-op.

PLEASE NOTE: Pain Medications typically cause problems with constipation. Please purchase stool softeners and laxatives to be taken at home as you recover.

Blood Clot Prevention



Joint Replacement – All patients who have hip or knee replacements will be started on a DVT (Deep Vein Thrombosis) or blood clot prevention drug beginning the day of surgery to be continued for 6 weeks after surgery. Your Orthopaedic physician will decide on the appropriate blood thinning medication for you. Examples of these are aspirin or Coumadin (oral medication) or Lovenox (a self-injectable drug). Your physician may require that you get regular lab testing to ascertain how much your blood is thinning so that your dosage of medication can be carefully titrated to your specific needs.



Spine Surgery – Most spine surgery patients will not require DVT Prophylaxis **UNLESS** they have a history of DVT. Please discuss any history with your Spine Surgeon.

Surgical Site/ Suture Care



All surgical patients will have a surgical site which will require care post-operatively. Your incision may be closed with surgical glue, you may have sutures or you may have surgical staples. Your physician will give you detailed instructions on how to keep the incision site clean, dry and protected during the first weeks until the incision heals and any sutures or staples can be removed safely.

For Spine Surgery Patients, you may have a surgical drain (a small tube with a fluid collection bulb on the end) that has been stitched in place inside your incision. If you have a surgical drain, your physician will either give you instructions for drain removal or have a home health nurse come to your home to check the incision and remove the drain for you.

Signs of Infection: Although most surgical patients are given antibiotic prophylaxis, occasionally, 1-3 % of patients will develop an infection at their surgical site which will need to be treated. If the surgical site becomes angry, inflamed, swollen, or exudes pus or cloudy fluid, or if the patient has a fever that exceeds 101.5 degrees and chills, this may indicate that the site is infected. Please report any of these signs immediately to your physician.

Recovery from Anesthesia



All spine surgeries performed in a hospital setting and most knee and hip replacements will require that the patient have general anesthesia. During this type of anesthesia, the patient will be given IV sedation to render them unconscious and a breathing tube will be inserted. The breathing tube helps to keep the patient breathing safely during the surgery, as they lose the ability to cough and clear their airways under deep sedation. The anesthesiologist will administer a variety of anesthetic agents to keep the patient asleep and free from pain during the procedure.

The goal of the anesthesiologist is to manage the patient's unconsciousness through the surgery and to carefully return them to a conscious state after the surgery, breathing safely on their own. This is usually done without any complications, but there are common side-effects that can occur after anesthesia, which are:

- A sore throat, from the breathing tube
- Dry mouth and hoarseness
- Nausea and vomiting
- Shivering
- Sleepiness
- Confusion
- Emotionality
- Sore muscles
- Difficulty urinating
- Itching



The side-effects from anesthesia can be barely noticeable and last for hours or they can be severe and last for days or weeks. If you are concerned about any side-effects you experience, it is important that you notify your physician immediately.

If you're preparing for spine, knee, or hip surgery, it's important to consult with your physician to have a clear understanding of what to expect during and after the surgery. Part I of this guide gives you a look at what to do to prepare for surgery, and what to expect post-surgery. Be sure to check out The Recovery Process Part II to learn more about individual surgeries and their recovery process. By working closely with your physician, you can learn more about what to expect in your individual case.

About Orthopaedic & Spine Center

Orthopaedic & Spine Center, located in Newport News, Virginia, is a full-service orthopedic practice with 32 patient exam rooms, three x-ray suites, a Lunar DPX Bone Densitometer Room, an Open 1.2 Tesla Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) Center, and a Physical Therapy Center on campus. OSC physicians have full staff privileges at Mary Immaculate Hospital and Riverside Regional Medical Center and active clinical staff privileges at Peninsula Surgery Center. Between 8% and 12% of OSC patients have surgery per year while the rest are treated with conservative approaches. To learn more, visit www.osc-ortho.com.



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