



WHAT TO EXPECT

Total Joint Replacement Surgery



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For a full library of health education materials, go to [UPMC.com/HealthLibrary](https://www.upmc.com/HealthLibrary).

Orthopaedic Services at UPMC in Central Pa.

Welcome to UPMC. Thank you for choosing our hospital to provide your health care services. We are dedicated to delivering the right care, at the right time, in the right way, every time. Our care embraces these 4 core values to provide the best patient experience we can:

- Quality and Patient Safety
- Dignity and Respect
- Community Service
- Care and Compassion

The information included in this booklet will provide you with details about your surgery and your pre- and postoperative course of rehabilitation (rehab). Every patient has different expectations and concerns about their joint replacement surgery. We hope that the information in this booklet will help you understand what to expect before and after surgery.

You may be asked to complete a short patient reported outcome (PRO) survey before surgery and 9 to 12 months after surgery about your joint pain and overall health. These surveys help us better understand what matters most to you during your surgery and throughout your recovery.

UPMC Central Pa. Portal

UPMC Central Pa. Portal is the portal for UPMC patients who receive care in hospitals in central Pennsylvania. This also includes UPMC outpatient centers, emergency and

urgent care, primary care, specialist, imaging, laboratory, and physical therapy facilities in central Pa. It is a free, secure online portal that allows you to manage your health. It lets you:

- Communicate with your UPMC doctor
- See your test results
- Renew prescriptions
- Schedule appointments
- View your medical records
- Manage your family's health
- Pay bills online
- Access MyHealth online easily if you are a UPMC Health Plan member

To sign up, go to **UPMC.com/CentralPaPortal** or download the free mobile app from the Apple App Store® or on Google Play.

Preparing for Surgery

Testing Before Surgery

Your doctor will determine what tests you need before surgery. This testing must be done within 30 days before your surgery. The most common tests may include:

- History and physical exam
- Blood work
- Chest X-ray
- Electrocardiogram (EKG)
- Urine sampling
- Dental exam

Your doctor may also refer you to a specialist based on your specific health history.

After your testing is done, please talk with your doctor or surgeon about:

- Allergies to medicines or metals
- Medicines you can take or should stop taking before your surgery (Coumadin®, Plavix®, aspirin, vitamin E, or herbal products)

UPMC offers outpatient testing to cover the range of services that you will need before your surgical procedure.

Education Before Surgery

UPMC offers a full range of education programs to help you prepare for your surgery. Your orthopaedic nurse navigator will help you throughout your surgical journey and discuss educational opportunities with you.

Preparing Your Home Before Surgery

You may go home the same day or within 1 to 2 days. To make your recovery smooth and comfortable, you can prepare yourself by doing the following:

- Prepare food and freeze individual meals that can easily be re-heated.
- Identify a friend or family member who will drive you home when you leave the hospital. You cannot drive yourself home from the hospital.
- Identify family and friends that will support you with household tasks until you are more comfortable.
- Decide where you will spend most of your day while you recover. Place commonly used items (tissues, phone, remote controls, reading materials, medicines, waste basket, shoes, etc.) within easy reach.

Home Safety Preparation Tips

After total joint replacement surgery, it is very important to take every precaution to avoid tripping and falls. Below are some tips to help make your living area safe:

Walkways and Stairs

- Clear any clutter from hallways and stairs.
- Remove throw rugs and floor mats.
- Pick up or move items you can trip on such as extension and lamp cords.
- If you have pets that may bump you off balance, consider having them stay with someone else or in another part of your home.

Lighting

- Make sure rooms and hallways are well lit and use night lights.

Kitchen

- Rearrange items at arm level (between waist and shoulder height) so you can reach them without stretching or stooping.

Bathroom

- Your orthopaedic nurse navigator will discuss showering after surgery.
- Do not soak in a bath tub, hot tub, swimming pool, or other body of water until approved by your surgeon.
- Consider installing grab bars in the shower or bathtub area.
- A raised toilet seat or shower bench may help you to be more comfortable.
- Move toiletries to a height where you can reach them easily.

Home Exercises for Total Joint Replacement Surgery

One important step in preparing for total joint replacement surgery is beginning physical therapy exercises. If you do these exercises, you will improve your mobility and prepare your body for physical therapy after surgery. All exercises are to be done on your bed. Do not get down on the floor to do these exercises.

1

Ankle pumps

To see this exercise in a video, please scan this QR code using the camera on your smartphone: *(some smartphones may need a QR code reader app)*

While sitting or lying down, “pump” your ankles up and down. **Repeat 10 times, 3 times a day.**



2

Quadriceps Sets (“Quad sets”)

To see this exercise in a video, please scan this QR code using the camera on your smartphone: *(some smartphones may need a QR code reader app)*

While sitting or lying down, straighten the involved knee. Tighten your quadriceps (thigh) muscle by pushing the back of your knee into the bed. Repeat on opposite knee. Hold for 5 seconds. **Repeat 10 times, 3 times a day.**



3

Gluteus Sets (“Glute Sets”)

To see this exercise in a video, please scan this QR code using the camera on your smartphone: *(some smartphones may need a QR code reader app)*

While sitting or lying down, squeeze your buttock muscles together. Hold for 5 seconds. **Repeat 10 times, 3 times a day.**



You might experience some soreness after doing the exercises. If you are unable to handle any of the exercises because of pain, stop the exercises.

4

Deep Breathing

Practicing deep breathing can help prevent complications after surgery. Take a slow, deep breath through your nose. Breathe in for 3 seconds. Feel your abdomen (belly) expand as you inhale (breathe in). Hold your breath for 3 seconds. Pucker your lips, and exhale (breathe out) through your mouth. Breathe out slowly and evenly for 6 seconds. Feel your abdomen (belly) move inward.

Discharge Planning

Depending on your surgery and surgeon, outpatient physical therapy may be recommended for you after surgery. If your surgeon has recommended outpatient physical therapy, please think about where you will go and begin to make arrangements. Your orthopaedic nurse navigator will help you.

Stop Smoking/Vaping/Chewing Tobacco

These activities affect the way your body handles surgery. When you stop before surgery, you are giving your body the best opportunity to heal and reduce the risk of complications like infections and poor wound healing.

This is an important step because it could have an impact on your surgery. We are here to help and can offer resources to support your success.

3 to 5 Days Before Surgery

Bathe or shower with antibacterial soap as recommended by your doctor. Do not shave the area where you are having surgery. This will help reduce the risk of infection.

Day Before Surgery

You can expect a call from the nurse the day before your surgery to review your medical history and list of medicines. If your surgery is on a Monday, you will get a call on Friday.

The nurse will give you directions to the hospital and a time to come in. Please have the following information available:

- **List of Medicines** – including over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, supplements, and herbal products
- **List of Allergies** – including medicines, food, or latex and the reaction that each cause

The nurse may tell you what medicines to take the morning of surgery.

What to Bring to the Hospital

- List of current medicines and doses
- Photo ID and insurance card
- Important contact numbers and information
- Shoes with non-slip bottoms or non-slip slippers
- Glasses and hearing aids with a case
- Books or puzzles
- Loose-fitting clothing such as shorts or sweat pants
- Personal toiletries such as face wash, lotion, brush, or comb
- CPAP machine
- Canes or walkers for when you leave the hospital (these should be left in the car)

Night Before Surgery

- Enjoy a healthy evening snack before bedtime, and follow the directions given to you by the nurse as to when you should stop drinking and eating before surgery.
- Do not smoke.
- Remove all jewelry and piercings. Do not bring any valuables to the hospital.
- Change your sheets. Sleep on a clean sheet the night before your surgery.
- Follow an antimicrobial cleansing preparation to reduce the risk of infection. Bathe or shower with antibacterial soap as recommended by your doctor. Do not shave the area where you are having surgery.
- Do not use hair spray or hair gel 24 hours before your surgery.



Your Surgical Experience

When you arrive at the hospital, you will be checked in. A staff member will take you back to the preparation area where a loved one may wait with you. Your anesthesiologist, a doctor who gives you medicine to put you to sleep during surgery, will meet with you to discuss anesthesia options. Your doctor will answer all of your questions and confirm your surgical site. The surgeon will talk to your loved ones once your surgery is completed.

After surgery, you will stay in the recovery room until you are awake and comfortable. You may have therapy in the recovery room before you are taken to the nursing unit. Your loved ones will be able to visit with you once you are taken to your hospital room and the nurses have you settled in.

On the nursing unit, you will focus on these 3 important goals:

Day of Surgery

- A pre-admission nurse will review eating, drinking, and medicines the night before your surgery and the day of your surgery.
- If you are taking any daily medicines for blood pressure, diabetes, or any other medical condition, follow the medicine instructions that were given to you by the nurse.
- Wear comfortable, loose-fitting clothing and low-heeled shoes, such as tennis shoes/sneakers.
- Do not use hair spray or hair gel.
- Do not use any lotions, perfumes, or deodorant.
- Do not wear contact lenses.
- If you have dentures, leave them with your loved ones.



Pain management – Tell your doctor and nurse if you need pain medicine. The goal is to get your pain under control.



Preventing blood clots – Wear your sequential compression devices and exercise your legs.



Preventing falls – Always ask for help to get out of bed.



Pain Management

You will not be pain free. The goal is for your pain to be tolerable. It is important for you to be honest with your nurse about your pain level. The pain level you report is the most valid measure of pain.

When you tell your nurse that you are having pain, they will ask you questions to decide the best way to help you manage your pain.

- Ask for pain medicine especially before going to therapy.
- Ice the surgical area often before and after therapy.
- Consider non-pain medicine options.
- Pain medicine may cause constipation.
- You may receive a stool softener to help.
- Drink plenty of fluids.



Preventing Blood Clots

Blood clots may form when you do not move for long periods of time. To prevent blood clots and get blood flowing:

- Get up and move around.
- Exercise your leg with ankle pumps.
- Take blood thinner medicine by mouth or injection.
- Wear sequential compression devices (SCDs), inflatable sleeves that fit around your legs, while in bed.
- Your doctor may have ordered special stockings to prevent blood clots. Use them in the hospital and at home.



Preventing Falls

- Always ask for help when getting up.
- Patients fall because strength, balance, and coordination are affected after surgery.
- Pain medicine can also affect your balance.

Physical Therapy After Surgery

Therapy is an important part of the healing process. It is easier to return to normal daily activities much more quickly if you work hard during your therapy sessions. Plan on participating in therapy every day, even on the day of your surgery.

Your physical therapist (PT) will teach you how to get in and out of bed, walk with an assistive device (such as a wheeled walker or cane), climb stairs, and how to do basic exercises. Physical therapists will also teach you how to protect your new joint and help you with any movement restrictions your doctor may have prescribed.

After surgery, some patients have difficulty completing basic activities of daily living, such as dressing, bathing, or getting in and out of the shower. Occupational therapists (OT) can help you learn how to safely do these activities.





Recovering From Surgery

After your doctor decides you are ready to go home, your nurse will prepare your discharge instructions and review them with you and your loved ones.

- **Therapy** - Therapy does not end when you leave the hospital. In addition to working with your physical therapist, continue to do your exercises every day until your follow-up appointment with your doctor. At that time, your doctor will give you more instructions on how to continue to gain strength and movement in your new joint.
- **Swelling** - Swelling and bruising can occur for weeks after your surgery. You may have swelling and bruising around the knee or hip and down into your lower leg. Here are some ways that you can help reduce swelling:
 - Do not sit with your legs dangling. Always elevate when you are resting.
 - Apply a cold pack to the area for 20 minutes at a time as needed.
 - Do ankle pumps and your exercises.
 - Elevate your legs at a level above your heart several times a day.
- **Bruising** - Bruising may last up to 6 to 8 weeks. This is part of the normal healing process. Being on blood thinning medicine can cause bruising as well, but blood thinning medicine is very important, so please continue to use it as recommended by your doctor.
- **Pain Medicine** - Always take your pain medicine with food or milk to prevent stomach upset.
- **Nutrition** - Your appetite may change after surgery, but nutrition is important for healing. Try eating small frequent meals.
- **Constipation** - Drinking fluids, moving, and taking a stool softener will help with constipation.
- **Sleep** - You may have problems with sleeping during the first few weeks after surgery. Getting into a comfortable position may be difficult, but this will get better with time. It may help if you avoid naps during the day, keep a regular sleep schedule, keep your bedroom slightly cool, and dim bright screens.
- **Emotions** - Surgery is stressful both physically and emotionally. It can affect your sleep, appetite, comfort, and energy levels. You may need to ask for help with some tasks and this might make you feel less independent. At times, you may feel a sense of sadness during your recovery. This is normal. Try to keep to your usual and familiar routine as much as possible. Visit with friends and family and spend time doing the things that you enjoy. However, it is important to talk to your doctor if these feelings of sadness continue for more than a few weeks.



Orthopaedic Surgery Patient Checklist

The following list will help you get ready for your surgery. You may also have other things you want to add to this list.

- I have prepared my home, including removing safety hazards on the floor, making things easier to locate in my house, preparing extra meals for the freezer, etc.
- I have the recommended items packed for the hospital, such as loose-fitting clothes for physical therapy.
- My pre-op testing has been completed.
- I started practicing my exercises.
- I made a list of my medicines to review with the nurse when they contact me before my surgery and I included any pain medicines or herbal products.
- I will take my medicine list to the hospital.
- If I have special equipment, such as a walker, cane, CPAP or BiPAP breathing machine, I put my name on it and will bring it with me.
- I have an antibacterial soap for my shower or bath before surgery.
- This person will drive me home and help me on the day I leave the hospital:

- This family member or friend will help me or stay with me the first week:

- I still have the following questions and will contact my doctor's office:

- These are other things I want to prepare before my surgery:

If you have any other questions, please call your doctor's office.



Important Things To Know

If you feel you are having a medical emergency, call **911**. Some examples of medical emergencies (but not all) include:

- Hard to breathe
- Coughing up blood
- Chest pain
- Fallen on the ground and unable to get up

Call your surgeon at any time, day or night, if you have questions or concerns or are experiencing any of the following:

- Increased redness, heat, drainage, swelling of incision (cut) site
- Incision has opened
- Increased pain, even when taking pain medicines
- Rash everywhere on your body
- Fever of 101 F or above



You can fill in this helpful information from your discharge instructions:

Total Joint Replacement Program Information and Contacts

UPMC Hospital	
Type of Surgery	
Date of Surgery	
Surgeon	
Surgeon Phone	
Navigator	
Navigator Phone	

Appointment Details

Doctor/Provider	Address	When	Comments





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For more information, visit us at
[UPMC.com/JointEducation](https://www.upmc.com/jointeducation).

UPMC Carlisle
361 Alexander Spring Road
Carlisle, PA 17015

UPMC Lititz
1500 Highlands Drive
Lititz, PA 17543

UPMC Community Osteopathic
4300 Londonderry Road
Harrisburg, PA 17109

UPMC Memorial
1701 Innovation Drive
York, PA 17408

UPMC Hanover
300 Highland Ave.
Hanover, PA 17331

UPMC West Shore
1995 Technology Parkway
Mechanicsburg, PA 17050

UPMC Harrisburg
111 South Front St.
Harrisburg, PA 17101