

## **DISCHARGE INSTRUCTONS - TOTAL HIP REPLACEMENT (THR)**

The operation of a total hip replacement is a very good, long-lasting procedure for relieving the pain involved with hip arthritis. This type of surgery has been used effectively now for over 40 years and remains the treatment of choice to give back an excellent quality of life to sufferers of hip arthritis.

Through an incision approximately 12-15cm long the hip joint can be entered with minimal trauma to the surrounding muscles. The hip is dislocated, and the femur bone is cut through. The ball and socket mechanism of the joint is then reconstructed with implants. The type of Anaesthetic that is used for the procedure will vary according to each patient's co-existent medical conditions and your wishes.

Following the surgery, you will be able to get up and walk on the hip the day after the procedure. You will be aided by the physiotherapist and nursing staff and taught how to safely use a frame initially and then graduate onto crutches.

Your hospital stay will be between 5-7 days and depending upon your home supports and progress, either be discharged home directly or to a rehabilitation facility for a further 7-10 days. Most people will be able to dispense with their crutches approximately 4-6 weeks following the surgery. During this time you should sleep flat on your back, not cross your legs and use a seat raise for the toilet. These precautions will be emphasized by the physiotherapist during your hospital stay and an occupational therapy assessment of your home may be required prior to discharge.

Driving the car is not allowed for 6 weeks following the surgery and car travel as a passenger should be minimised during this period. These restrictions minimise the chance of the hip dislocating whilst the muscles and soft tissues around your hip heal. At 6 weeks following the procedure you will be reviewed by your surgeon. Most patients are then given all clear to return to walking, swimming, cycling, golf, tennis, bowls and other recreational pursuits. It is not advised that you undertake running or jumping activities following a hip replacement. Your hip replacement has an expected life span of around 15 years and will be regularly reviewed during this time.

### **Frequently asked Questions:**

- What are the risks involved with the procedure?

There are general risks associated with any surgery, these are those of the Anaesthetic (please speak to your anaesthetist prior to the operation), bleeding, blood clots (deep vein thrombosis (DVT) and pulmonary embolization (PE), infection and vascular injury. Specific to the surgery are the risks of dislocation of the hip prosthesis, leg length inequality, fracture of the pelvis or femur, wear and loosening of the implants, audible 'squeaking' of the articulating components (ceramics), nerve injury.

- When can I return to work?

Most people should be able to return to work at 3 months post-surgery. This may be extended if you perform a job involving heavy manual labour.

- When can I resume sexual activity?

Sexual intercourse can safely be undertaken 6 weeks following the surgery.

- How long do I need to keep taking pain killing medicine for?

When you leave the hospital, you will be given tablet analgesia for pain. You should take this for as long as you have pain when walking or at night. Most people can cease analgesics by 4 weeks following the surgery.

- Do I need to do physiotherapy when I go home?

You will be given a sheet of exercises from the physiotherapist when you leave the hospital. You should do these exercises as instructed. Following review with your surgeon it may be recommended you commence a hydrotherapy program.

**Ruining Low on Medication:** Reminder our practice closes at 3pm on Fridays. To ensure you receive your script in time, please contact our rooms prior to 12pm to request further medication.