

## How long will I be in the hospital?

Depending on your surgery and medical history, your hospital stay will last from approximately one to four days.

## What do I need to bring to the hospital?

Please bring a **list** of your current medications and dosages, as well as a list of any allergies you may have. Bring comfortable and fitted shoes, like sneakers. Slippers are not advisable. Please also bring loose fitting clothes that will fit easily over your surgical sites. Please do not bring valuables or your medications. Please arrange for someone to pick you up from the hospital. Preparing an advance directive is also advisable to any patient planning to enter the hospital for care. **For more information, visit [chesapeakehospital.com/advanced-directives](https://www.chesapeakehospital.com/advanced-directives).**

## Can I go directly home after my hospital stay or will I need to go to inpatient rehabilitation? What else will I need to prepare for in regards to after care?

Your post-surgical rehabilitation plan is a very personalized plan based on your health and available home resources. Most patients go home with post-surgical care and rehabilitation arranged by a home health agency. This includes regular visits by a physical therapist and a home health nurse. These care partners typically stay in your home for about one hour per visit. The length and frequency of visits will be determined by your doctor based on your recovery process. It is strongly advised to prearrange for someone, like a family member or friend, to also be available to help you in your home as well. If you are in need of help with meals, Meals on Wheels can be contacted to deliver meals to your home. The hospital's discharge planner and Orthopedic Nurse Navigator will assist with your post-surgical needs.

## Can I ride home in the car?

Although you can ride home from the hospital and to your follow-up appointments in a car, you should not ride or drive in a car for any other reason until your surgeon says it is okay. The following points are important related to car information:

- After hip replacement surgery, you are at a greater risk for dislocating your hip. This risk may be for about three to four weeks after surgery.
- After knee replacement surgery, some surgeons may restrict riding or driving in the car for up to four weeks.
- With both surgeries you should not drive or ride longer than 45 minutes. If you do ride in a car, you should stop every 45 minutes to get out of the car and walk. This will prevent swelling and may decrease stiffness in your joints.
- Follow the hip precautions listed in your patient hand book and the advice of your surgeon.

## Can I sit in a recliner?

Recliners and sofas are not recommended after your knee or hip replacement because they are not supportive, difficult to get out of and can limit range of motion. Straight back chairs with arm rests are suggested for safety. After a knee replacement, place a rolled towel under your ankle when lying down to increase range of motion. While in the hospital, your therapist will teach you how to safely get up to exit the chair.

## When can I shower?

You must wait to shower until your stitches are removed, which can be up to 14 days after surgery. Until that time, dry shampoo and powdered soap can be useful, and are available at most department stores. Check with your surgeon post-surgery.

## Can I walk outside?

Yes, you may go outside to walk with the assistance of your walker, but you should avoid unstable ground, such as wet grass and gravel. Avoiding bad weather is also advisable. Please remember to go slowly and to be cautious of the length of your return trip.

## How much activity can I expect?

Although you are recovering, it is not recommended to sit longer than 45 minutes at one time. Take a walk between resting times. Sitting for long periods will increase the stiffness and swelling in your legs and also increase the risk for blood clots. To reduce this swelling, you should rest by reclining in your bed for one hour at a time, up to two times daily. You will be able to increase your activity as your therapy progresses and as your therapist and physician instruct.

## How long will I need to use the toilet chair?

- After hip replacement, you will need to continue to use the toilet chair for at least six months. You should also use the wheelchair accessible toilets when in public areas because the other toilets may be too low for you to safely use.
- After knee replacement surgery, you should use the toilet chair until you feel comfortable and strong enough to get up safely from your home toilet.

Many insurance plans cover the cost of a toilet chair, which is available through a variety of durable medical equipment companies. If your insurance does not cover the cost of a chair, you can easily buy one through local health care essentials stores. Ask the Orthopedic Nurse Navigator or your care manager for more information.

## Why is my leg swollen?

It is not uncommon for you to experience swelling after surgery. These tips may help decrease the amount of swelling you may experience:

- Do not sit more than 45 minutes and be sure to take short walks.
- Apply ice packs to the incision frequently for the first week. Twenty minutes on the incision site and twenty minutes off is usually the rule of thumb.
- Rest by reclining in your bed for one hour, twice per day.
- Wear the elastic compression stockings provided to you by the hospital.

## Notify your physician or the Orthopedic Nurse Navigator if you notice any of the following:

- Fever of more than 101.5°.
- No bowel movement in three days.
- Odor or increased redness or drainage at the incision site.
- Increased pain that is not controlled with medication.
- Increased swelling that does not decrease after you have elevated your feet.

**If you have any questions about this information, or additional inquiries, please call the Orthopedic Nurse Navigator or your homecare provider.**