Thank you for choosing Alton Memorial Hospital for your total joint replacement surgery. We are committed to providing you with excellent care throughout your experience.

This guide is designed to give you the important information you need to achieve the best outcome from your total joint replacement surgery.

THE DAY BEFORE YOUR SURGERY

You should receive a call after 3 p.m. the business day before your surgery from the Ambulatory Surgery department to confirm your procedure and the time you need to arrive at the hospital.

THE NIGHT BEFORE YOUR SURGERY

Shower and wash your hair as usual, then with a fresh cloth you will need to wash with the special soap (Hibiclens/ Chlorhexidine Gluconate). Wash your entire body from the neck down. (Do not use on face hair or genitals). Rinse soap off your body completely.

- Do not use any lotions or powders after your showers
- Remove all nail polish
- Do not shave at or near the area where you are having surgery
- Please use freshly washed night clothes and bed linens after your shower with the special soap to help to reduce risk of infection
- Do not eat or drink anything after midnight. Also do not chew gum, candy or lozenges after midnight

THE DAY OF SURGERY

Shower once again with the special soap, avoiding face, hair and genital areas, and rinse entire body completely.

- Bring with you comfortable walking shoes and loose-fitting clothing. Please leave valuables, jewelry and piercings at home.
- Take only the medications you have been instructed to take with sips of water only.
You should report directly to the Ambulatory Surgery department; you do not need to stop at the Registration area in the Duncan Wing.

There is free Valet parking available at the main entrance from 7 a.m. 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. There are wheelchairs for use at this entrance. You may also enter the hospital from the west side of the Duncan Wing across from the large parking lot.

From the Registration area, follow the hallway to the Starbucks coffee area. Take those elevators to Lower Level 1 (LL1), go right off the elevators and follow the hallway and signs to Ambulatory Surgery.

**WHAT HAPPENS NEXT**

You will check in at the Ambulatory surgery reception desk. Please bring your insurance cards and identification. You will meet your pre-operative nurse, and you will be asked to change into a surgical gown, have your vital signs taken, sign your surgical consent and have your IV started.

You will meet with an anesthesiologist to discuss and answer any questions you have regarding your anesthesia care.

Your surgeon will meet with you again to review your surgical plan and mark the surgical site.

Your family/friends will be allowed to sit with you before you go to surgery. We ask that visitors are limited to two at a time in the pre-op area.

**DURING YOUR SURGERY**

Your surgical team will take excellent care of you. Specially trained nurses and the anesthesia team will closely monitor you throughout your procedure.

You will wake up in the Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU/ Recovery Room), where specially trained nurses and the anesthesia team will monitor your vital signs and progress. When you have met anesthesia criteria, you will be discharged to your hospital room. Your family can follow and track your progress on the tracking board in the waiting room. Once you are discharged from the recovery room, together with your family you will then be moved to your assigned private hospital room.

**YOUR HOSPITAL STAY**

Your nurse will welcome you and your family to the hospital and help you settle into your room, which is equipped to help you get up and moving. Your vital signs (blood pressure, heart rate, temperature) will be checked often while you are in the hospital. You may have oxygen overnight and also may have a sensor on your finger to monitor oxygen level. You will have fluids going through your IV following surgery. You will have a dressing over your incision, which may feel bulky. Swelling is very common after surgery. Using the ice or cold therapy will help keep the swelling and pain under control. Once you are awake and alert and have met criteria, your nurse or physical therapy will help you get out of bed. **Your safety is very important to us. Remember to call for help anytime you feel that you need help getting up.**
PAIN MANAGEMENT

Pain is an expected part of recovery. Pain levels vary by person. We will ask you to rate your pain several times a day. So during your stay you will be asked to rate your pain on a scale of 0 to 10. This is to help us evaluate your pain management progress. It is important to tell us if you have had any problems with pain medications in the past. Above all, we want you to be as comfortable as possible while you recover.

0     1     2     3     4     5     6     7     8     9     10
NO PAIN                              MODERATE PAIN                    WORST POSSIBLE
PAIN

Pain medications will be administered to help decrease pain.

Pain medications are NOT scheduled. Pain medicines are given only when you ask for them.

Talk with your nurse if your pain is not getting better or you are experiencing a new type of pain.

PREVENTING COMPICATIONS AFTER SURGERY

To help minimize the risk of developing a blood clot or pneumonia, your nurse or therapist may help you sit on the side of your bed the evening of your surgery. You will be encouraged each day to get out of bed and move around. This also will increase the range of motion of your new joint and help your lungs get stronger.

Preventing blood clots:

Your surgeon and entire team will determine what treatments to use to help prevent blood clots, which are a serious condition:

- After surgery and until your physician tells you otherwise, you'll take blood thinning medication.
- Additional preventive measures may include anti-embolism stockings (TED hose) and a pneumatic compression device to help keep the blood flowing.
- The nursing staff will encourage you to paddle your feet and ankles and move your legs to keep the blood flowing.

Preventing pneumonia:

- You will receive an incentive spirometer to help prevent the risk of pneumonia. It is a device that will help us assess the amount of air you use with each breath, and you will need to use it at least 10 times every hour while you are awake.
- It is important to be out of bed and be active every day. This helps you take deeper breaths and decreases your risk for pneumonia.
Physical Therapy

After surgery, your physical therapy team will help you walk short distances and provide you with your therapy plan that includes individual exercises. You will be seen the evening of surgery, if time permits, and then one to two times a day until discharge

- You may complete your therapy in one of our gyms, where you will learn exercises and develop a walking routine. Each day we will encourage you to walk a little further and exercise a little more.
- Protecting your new joint is very important, so you will be taught any precautions or restrictions that will help reduce soreness, while strengthening your muscles around the joint.
- The therapist will give instruction and assess your ability to move around in bed, stand up and walk. At first, you will use a wheeled walker.
- The primary goal is to strengthen your operated leg.
- Although, it may be painful, the sooner you start moving your new joint, the better your recovery rate and function will occur.

Occupational Therapy

The day of or morning after surgery, you will meet with your occupational therapist to learn how to become independent again. Your OT will help you get dressed in your own clothes, teach you how to safely bathe, dress, and perform other everyday activities. Please bring 1 or 2 changes of clothes for your stay. Comfortable clothing such as sweat pants, pajama pants, t-shirts, sweater or jacket if you tend to get cold are best.

Planning your discharge

From the moment you decided to have joint replacement surgery until today, the health care team has been working with you to get you home and back to your daily activities as soon as possible. Your discharge is based on:

- Pain management. Your pain is controlled with oral pain medications.
- Your medical condition is stable.
- You successfully met physical and occupational therapy goals.

Your surgeon and health care team will work with you to determine the level of care and follow-up you will need after you go home to ensure a full recovery. Then your case manager or social worker will arrange it. Also, your nurses and therapists will advise you on how to perform in-home exercises to help you continue strengthening your new joint.

We also will work with you to determine your best option for continuing therapy after you leave the hospital. Your options include:

- Home health care
- Skilled nursing home
- Outpatient Physical Therapy
Prescriptions

Your surgeon will prescribe medication for home. As a service to you, BJC Home Care Pharmacy will deliver these newly prescribed medications to your room upon discharge. Based on your insurance requirements, copayment will be due at that time. Please make necessary arrangements to have this copay available. BJC Home Care Pharmacy accepts cash, check, credit, or debit cards.

Incision care

Your incision will be covered with a dressing. Before you go home, your surgeon, your physician assistant, or nurse will explain how to take care of your wound and when to remove your dressing. Make sure you understand these instructions before you leave the hospital and who to contact if you need assistance.

Icing and Elevation

After a joint replacement, swelling is expected. Swelling can cause increased pain and limit your range of motion, so taking steps to reduce the swelling is important. Continue using ice at home to help reduce swelling.

For knee replacement, you may use pillows to elevate. However, it’s important to elevate the entire leg, down to the ankle. Never put a pillow only behind your knee so your knee is in a bent position. Your knee should be straight when elevated.

Also remember:

- You are not permitted to drive a car while taking narcotic pain medication. You may not drive before your first post-op visit.
- It may take several days to have a bowel movement. Anesthesia and pain medication often cause constipation. Drink plenty of fluids and eat whole grains, fruits, and vegetables. A stool softener or laxative can help bowel function return to normal.
- You may experience discomfort in your operated joint, and you may have difficulty sleeping at night. This is part of the recovery process. Getting up and moving around relieves some of the discomfort.
- Please do not hesitate to call your surgeon’s office with questions or concerns.
ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTIONS:

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PHONE NUMBERS

SURGICAL SERVICE/ AMBULATORY SURGERY  618-463-7548
Cathy Wagner – Manager  618-463-7520
Pre-Anesthesia Testing  618-433-6233

SURGICAL CARE UNIT  618-463-7440
Cindy Bray-Manager

HUMAN MOTION INSTITUTE/REHAB SERVICES  618-463-7429
Sue Walker - Manager