

# Getting Ready for Joint Replacement Surgery



ChristianaCare®



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## Section 1

# Welcome

Thank you for choosing the ChristianaCare Center for Advanced Joint Replacement for your surgery.

This guide will help you know what to expect before, during, and after your surgery. Please bring this guide with you to:

- **The hospital on your surgery day**
- **Your physical therapy visits after surgery**

You play a key role in your recovery and success after surgery. We encourage you to actively participate in your care and ask questions every step of the way. We are here to support you through your journey and to help you reach your goals.

## Keeping you safe

When you decide to have surgery, you want to know that you are in the best hands possible. Your care team at ChristianaCare is committed to giving you safe, high-quality care. The team receives extra training, resources, and the best technology to keep you safe while you are in the hospital and at home.

## The right support

It is helpful to have a support person in mind to help you through your surgery journey. This can be a reliable friend or family member who can provide support before and after surgery. We will partner with you and your support person during your care.

## Section 2

# Planning for Your Surgery

Planning for your surgery ahead of time can help you feel more comfortable and know what to expect.

### Learn about your surgery

Before surgery, you will meet with someone from your care team to learn more about your surgery. This will be at the Center for Surgical Optimization, or CSO. If possible, include your support person in this so they can learn how to help you in your recovery.

Your surgeon will tell you your surgery date and arrival time. This may be early on or at your last appointment before surgery.



## Section 3

# About Your Hospital Stay

The hospital offers private rooms with internet access for your comfort after surgery. The program includes:

- A care team that helps you plan your care before and after surgery.
- A session with your care team to learn about your surgery over the phone.
- Coaching for family and friends who will help with your recovery.
- A treatment plan that meets your needs.

## Your care team

Your care team is made up of the following caregivers. They will all work together to make sure you get the care that is right for you.

**Your surgeon** will perform your surgery and work with the other members of the care team to make sure you get the care you need. Your surgery team will follow up with your progress during your hospital stay.

**A Nurse Navigator** will answer any questions and help you learn what to expect.

**The care coordinator team** will guide you through your surgery journey from start to finish. They will help you get ready before surgery, and arrange the care you need after your surgery.

**A registered nurse (RN)** will help you with your daily activities, keep you updated on your care, and give you the medicine and care you need during your hospital stay.



**A physical therapist (PT) and occupational therapist (OT)** will help you move better and care for yourself through exercise and the use of assistive equipment, as needed.

**A patient care technician (PCT)** will help you with activities in your daily routine, including: bathing, eating meals, and moving around.

## **Reaching your care coordinator**

**Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

**Phone: 302-320-2460**

**Fax: 302-320-5139**



## Section 4

# Before Surgery

The checklist below will tell you everything you need to do before surgery. Doing these things before your surgery will help you know you are ready on your surgery day.

### Before Surgery Checklist

- ❑ **Complete your pre-registration.** After your surgery has been scheduled, the Admitting Department will call you to gather your information by phone.
- ❑ **Go to all needed appointments before surgery.** Your surgeon may have you see your primary care provider or a specialist (like a heart doctor or a lung doctor) before surgery to be sure you are safe to receive anesthesia during your surgery.
- ❑ **Get your pre-surgery testing.** After your surgery is scheduled, your surgeon will give you instructions for any testing you may need. Have testing done at a lab approved by your insurance company. It is best to have the blood work done 3 to 4 weeks before your surgery.

ChristianaCare offers pre-admission testing at the Newark and Wilmington hospital campuses and the Middletown Emergency Department. Please visit [ChristianaCare.org/labservices](https://www.christianacare.org/labservices) for instructions, locations and to schedule your appointment.

- ❑ **Make a copy of your Advance Directives, or consider creating them if you do not currently have them (optional).** Advance directives are documents you create while you are feeling well and thinking clearly. They explain to your family and your health care providers what medical treatment you wish to receive, or not to receive, should you become unconscious or too ill to make the decision at a later point in your life.
- ❑ **See a dentist (optional).** If you are not current with your regular checkups, we recommend you see your dentist. Please contact your surgeon's office if you need extensive dental work before your surgery.



- ❑ **Review your medicine list with your care team.** Some medicine may need to be held before your surgery.

**IMPORTANT** - If you are on Coumadin, Plavix, Xarelto, Eliquis, Pradaxa or other blood thinners, you will need special instructions from the doctor who prescribed this medication before you can stop taking them. Do not stop taking these medications unless your provider tells you to stop. If you take aspirin every day, talk to your provider about whether or not you should stop this before your surgery.

- ❑ **Shower 5 days before surgery using special Chlorhexidine solution.** Follow the information on the direction sheet. Preparing your skin for surgery will help lower your chance of infection of your knee. This solution will be mailed or given to you at your CSO visit.
- ❑ **Set up outpatient physical therapy.** Once you know your surgery date, schedule your physical therapy appointment for after surgery. This will help make sure you can start right away.

Physical therapy appointment date and time: \_\_\_\_\_

## The Night Before Surgery

- ❑ **Do NOT eat or drink anything after midnight** unless otherwise told to do so. If your nurse or surgeon tells you to take any medicines by mouth on the day of surgery, you may take these with a sip of water.

## Section 4

### What to Bring

- A photo ID
- A copy of your Advance Directive, like Instructions for Health Care or a Power of Attorney for Health Care, if you have one.
- Your Joint Replacement Surgery Guide.
- Any personal home medical equipment (like a CPAP if you use it).
- Wear loose fitting clothes to the hospital. You can wear the same clothes when you go home (drawstring or elastic waist sweatpants or shorts and short sleeve t-shirts).
- Button-down or zip up sweater or jacket.
- Sneakers or flat-soled rubber shoes and socks. Avoid flip flops and clogs.
- Place your name on items you are bringing to the hospital.

### Do NOT bring:

- Medications (unless your care coordinator asks you to bring them)
- Valuables like your watch, wallet, handbags, money or jewelry.

*ChristianaCare is not responsible for lost, damaged, or stolen items.*



## Section 5

# In the Hospital

When your surgery date finally arrives, it will go more smoothly for you and your visitors if you know what to expect. Please review the following information, and share it with your support person.

### Parking

Drive to the hospital where you will be getting your surgery. Parking is available in the parking garage in front of both Christiana and Wilmington Hospitals.

Visitation Guidelines - Our visitor policy may change at any time. Please check [ChristianaCare.org](http://ChristianaCare.org) or call 302-733-1000 for the most current information.

### Where to Go

Christiana Hospital: Enter the hospital's main lobby and ask to be directed to the Surgical Admission Unit.

Wilmington Hospital: Enter Wilmington Hospital at the main entrance. Take the south elevators to the 3rd floor, exit the elevators to the right and check in at the surgical waiting room on the left.

### What to Expect at Check-in

Your care team will help you get ready in the surgery prep area. You will then be taken to the operating room holding area.

Your support person will be directed to the waiting area. They will be updated when your procedure is complete.

In the surgery prep area, an intravenous (IV) line will be started and your care team will come meet you and help get you ready for surgery. They will then take you to the operating room where you will have your surgery.

## Section 6

# After Surgery

After surgery, you will be taken to a recovery area for about 1 to 2 hours. Depending on your situation, you may wake up with oxygen, circulation boots, stockings or a device on your finger to measure oxygen. Your care team will watch you closely during this time and work on managing your pain after surgery.

Expect to be out of bed and doing light exercises after surgery. This helps prevent blood clots.

You may also be asked to breathe into a breathing device, called an incentive spirometer. This helps keep your lungs healthy after surgery.

## Managing Your Pain After Surgery

Pain medicine is available for you throughout your hospital stay. You will be asked to rate your pain on a scale of 0-10, with “0” being no pain and “10” being the worst pain possible.



Please let someone from your care team know if you are having pain. We will work with you to manage your pain. Some things that may be used to manage your pain include:

- Medicines
- Relaxation
- Changing your position
- Heat or cold therapy
- Physical therapy



## Clinical Diary

You will also get a clinical diary after surgery where your physical therapist will make notes of your progress. Please remember to bring this with you to your physical therapy visits.

## Getting ready to go home

Many people can go home the day of or the day after surgery. Your care coordinator will work with you before surgery to help you plan for your care after surgery. They may also check in with you after surgery to see if there are any changes with your care. They will help set up assistive devices, and the right type of therapy after surgery, if needed.

Before you are ready to leave the hospital, your nurse will review how to care for yourself at home.

## Day of surgery

On the day of your surgery, you will:

- Meet with a physical therapist.
- Learn how to walk with a walker.
- Check in with your surgery and medical team.
- See an occupational therapist (if you are leaving the hospital).

Most people will go home on the day of surgery. If you need to stay in the hospital longer, your care team will keep you updated on your plan.

## Section 7

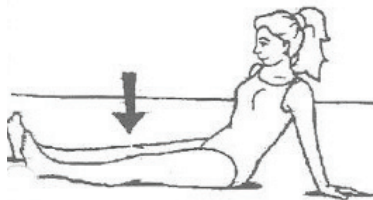
# Exercise After Surgery

Doing exercises after surgery helps you heal faster and get back to your normal activities. The exercises shown in this guide are some of the exercises you will do in your physical therapy sessions after surgery. Remember to bring this guide with you when you see your physical therapist.



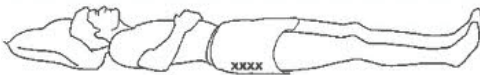
### Ankle Pumps

1. Bend your ankles up and down as if you are pumping the gas pedal.
2. 30 pumps, 2 times per day.



### Quad Sets

1. Sit reclined or lie in bed with legs straight.
2. Press the back of your knees down. This will tighten the muscles on top of your thighs and straighten your knees.
3. Hold for 5 seconds.
4. 30 repetitions, 2 times per day.



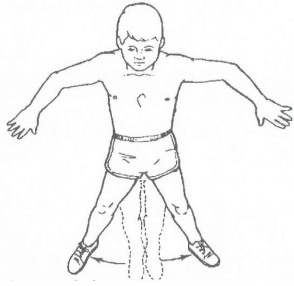
### Gluteal Sets

1. Squeeze your buttocks together as tightly as possible.
2. Hold for 5 seconds.
3. 30 repetitions, 2 times per day.



### Heel Slides

1. Lie on your back or in a reclined position.
2. Bend your surgical knee and slide your heel up toward your body as shown.
3. Hold for 1 second, slowly relax.
4. 30 repetitions, 2 times per day.



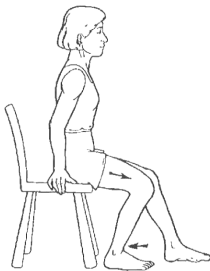
## Windshield Wipers

1. Lie on your back or in a reclined position.
2. Slide your legs out to the sides, keeping your toes pointing up toward the ceiling.
3. Bring your leg back to the starting position.
4. 30 repetitions, 2 times per day.



## Seated Knee Extension

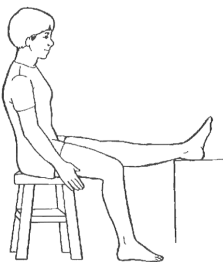
1. Sit in a chair or on the bed with your thigh supported.
2. Straighten your knee fully.
3. Hold for 1 second, and slowly lower.
4. 30 repetitions, 2 times per day.



## Seated Knee Flexion Stretch

### Knee Replacement Only Exercise

1. Sit on the front of a chair as pictured.
2. Bend your surgical knee and slide foot back toward the chair until you feel a stretch in the front of your knee.
3. Hold for 5 seconds.
4. 30 repetitions, 2 times per day.



## Seated Hamstring Stretch

### Knee Replacement Only Exercise

1. Sit with your surgical leg propped as shown.
2. Relax, letting the leg straighten.
3. Hold for 10-15 minutes.
4. 1 repetition, 2 times per day.



## Seated Hip Flexion

### Hip Replacement Only Exercise

1. Lean back in a chair.
2. For patients with posterior hip precautions, it is important to lift ONLY to the level of your hip in order to maintain your hip precautions.
3. Hold for 1 second.
4. 30 repetitions, 2 times per day.

## Section 8

# Recovering from Surgery

When you go home, there are some things you need to know to stay safe and comfortable.

## Managing your pain

It's common to have some pain after surgery. Here are some things you can do at home to help manage your pain.

**Use ice throughout the day.** If using an ice machine, someone from your care team will show you how to use it. If you are using regular ice or cold packs, do not apply for more than 20 minutes at a time. Give yourself 20-minute breaks in between. Never place ice directly on your skin. Use a clean hand towel or wash cloth over your incision to protect your skin.

**Stay active to prevent stiffness, improve healing, and lower the chance of blood clots.** Plan on taking a short walk every hour while you're awake.

**Follow your provider's instructions for pain medicine.** If ordered by your provider, it can be helpful to take pain medicine 30 minutes before physical therapy sessions.

## Swelling

You may find swelling at the surgery site and the areas around it. It is common to have swelling for 1 to 2 weeks after surgery. Sometimes it gets worse around days 4 to 7. To prevent swelling, lie with your legs elevated on pillows above your heart 2 to 3 times a day. When you elevate your leg, keep your knee straight. Do not bend it. Continue doing your exercises and using ice to help with swelling.





## Constipation

Pain medicine can lead to constipation. Some things that can help include:

- Extra fiber in your diet.
- Drinking plenty of water.

Over the counter stool softeners or laxatives may also help. Check your medicine list on your discharge instructions or ask your provider if these are safe for you before you take them.

## Caring for your incision

While you are in the hospital, your surgeon and nurse will give instructions on how to care for your incision. This will also be printed on your discharge instructions. Always wash your hands before and after caring for your incision.

## Preventing blood clots after surgery

After surgery, there is a higher chance of getting a blood clot. Taking blood thinners and increasing activity after surgery will lessen the chance of blood clots.

You can help to prevent blood clots in your legs by:

- Knowing the signs and symptoms of blood clots:
  - Pain or tenderness.
  - Discoloration of the skin.
  - Swelling or tightness of the lower leg.
- Doing your exercises: ankle pumps, quad and gluteal sets.
- Walking and slowly adding activity.
- Drinking plenty of fluids. Avoid caffeine.

- Taking blood thinning medicine as directed by your surgeon. Refer to your medicine list on your discharge instructions for more information.

In rare cases, a blood clot in your leg can break off and move to your lungs. This is called a pulmonary embolism, or PE. Signs of a PE include:

- Shortness of breath.
- Fast breathing.
- Fast heart rate.
- Chest pain.
- Cough that may or may not include blood.
- Restlessness, anxiety.
- Fainting or near fainting episode.
- Fever.

If you are having signs of a blood clot, please call your doctor. Call 911 if you are having signs of a pulmonary embolism.

If you need dental care after your surgery, talk with your surgeon about the use of antibiotics when visiting the dentist.

## **Thank You**

Each year, the team at the ChristianaCare Center for Advanced Joint Replacement performs more than 2,500 surgeries—more than any other hospital in the region. Our expert team will create a treatment plan made just for you.

Sticking to your plan will help you recover faster and get you back to the activities that you love. Refer to your book and discharge instructions often, and remember to ask questions. We are here to help you every step of the way.

Thank you for choosing the ChristianaCare Center for Advanced Joint Replacement.





[ChristianaCare.org/joint](https://christianacare.org/joint)

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