

Waiting for or Recovering from Joint Replacement Surgery During the Time of COVID-19



During this time of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, many elective surgeries, such as hip and knee replacements, are being postponed. This is necessary to ensure proper hospital staff and resources are available to care for patients affected by this virus. People are being asked to practice social distancing in their communities and also to avoid hospitals and clinics unless they are ill. In the meantime, what can you do to take care of your painful hip and knee joints?

Whether you are waiting to have an elective hip or knee replacement, or you have just had surgery and are recovering at home, there are ways to improve the health of your joints on your own.

Surgery delayed? Here's what you can do before surgery:

Medications can help manage your pain while exercises can strengthen your legs as you await your new surgery date. The American Association of Hip and Knee Surgeons recommends the following:

1. Follow the medication guidelines from your doctor. This usually includes anti-inflammatories. Joint pain can be treated with over-the-counter pain relief medication but be sure check with your primary care physician before starting any new medication.
2. Applying ice or heat on an affected joint can also help you manage your pain.
3. Stretching and low-impact exercises can help keep your joints and muscles mobile. Watch this video
<https://hipknee.aahks.org/preparing-for-joint-replacement-surgery-at-home-exercises>
4. Lose weight. Remember, for every pound of weight lost, your hips and knees can be unloaded by 3-6 pounds!

Please read these articles:

Relieving Hip and Knee Pain Without Surgery

<https://hipknee.aahks.org/relieving-hip-and-knee-pain-without-surgery/>

Opioid Use Before Hip or Knee Surgery Can Mean Trouble

<https://hipknee.aahks.org/opioid-use-before-hip-or-knee-surgery-can-mean-trouble/>

Follow-up visits postponed? Here's what you can do after surgery:

Following your exercise routine, taking your medications prescribed by your doctor, and getting a good night's sleep are very important on the road to recovery after hip or knee replacement. The American Association of Hip and Knee Surgeons recommends the following:



1. Take your prescription and over-the-counter medication as directed by your doctor.
2. Practice rest, ice, compression and elevation.
3. Exercise!

Please watch our videos and follow along:

- Exercises after hip replacement
<https://hipknee.aahks.org/physical-therapy-exercises-after-hip-replacement>
- Exercises after knee replacement
<https://hipknee.aahks.org/physical-therapy-after-knee-replacement-video>

Please read these articles:

- How to Relieve Pain after Hip or Knee Surgery
<https://hipknee.aahks.org/how-to-relieve-pain-after-hip-or-knee-surgery>
- Getting a Good Night's Sleep after Hip or Knee Replacement Surgery
<https://hipknee.aahks.org/getting-a-good-nights-sleep-after-hip-or-knee-replacement-surgery>

Communicate with Your Surgeon

Even though it's best to stay away from hospitals and clinics right now unless you are seriously ill, **stay in touch with your doctor** when you experience the following issues related to your hip or knee joints:

- Experiencing pain that isn't controlled by the prescribed medications
- Have significantly increased swelling and/or pain
- Persistent wound drainage
- Concerns about incision
- Sustain an injury

You can probably connect by phone. Check with your doctor's office to see what options they may have in place to connect with you virtually – like with a video call or patient engagement app for your smartphone or tablet. Telehealth options are rapidly emerging and is potentially an option to connect with your health care team.

Getting Past the Pandemic

During these trying times it is important to remember that delaying your surgery is for the **greater good of our communities** as all hospital resources are necessary to treat and prevent the spread of this virus.



Scan this with your phone to
connect to more articles and
videos on hip and knee care.

*This article has been written and peer reviewed by the AAHKS Patient and Public Relations Committee and the AAHKS Evidence Based Medicine Committee. Links to these pages or content used from the articles must be given proper citation to the American Association of Hip and Knee Surgeons.
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