



Matthew W. Russo, M.D.

Anterior Hip Arthroplasty Discharge Instructions

Please note that additional answers to frequently asked questions may be found on our website (www.matrussomd.com) as well as access to detailed information, tips, and exercise therapy videos specific to your timeline both before and after your surgery. You will be provided the password to access this information in the recovery tab at the time your surgery is scheduled in the office.

The #1 rule is no falling. Risk of falls is highest in the first week after surgery. Remember to count to 5 after you stand up before moving anywhere. Use your walker at least for the first week even if you feel like you don't need it.

- **SWELLING:** You may have swelling and bruising from your thigh all the way to your toes. This is normal. Elevate your legs any time you are sitting down. You may sleep on either side after surgery based on your comfort but try not to place direct pressure on your incision. You may prefer to sleep with a pillow between your legs but this is not required. Walking every hour and doing your exercises will help strengthen your muscles and resolve swelling. You can expect that this swelling will gradually resolve in the next weeks and months following surgery. Although a bag of ice or frozen peas is typically sufficient, ice machines are also available for purchase at our office and should be used for 20 minutes at a time. Additionally, you will be sent home from the hospital or surgery center with a pair of thigh-high (above the knee) compression stockings. Aside from showering, compression stockings should be worn continuously until your first postop visit at 10-14 days following your surgery. Some patients choose to remove the stockings at night if they find them uncomfortable to sleep. You may choose to purchase more comfortable custom stockings prior to your surgery either at our office or at *See The Trainer* located at 8752 East Shea Blvd. Ste 128, Scottsdale, AZ 85260 or at any other retailer as long as the compression rating is between 20-30mmHg.
- **PREVENTING BLOOD CLOTS:** In addition to the compression stockings and frequent mobilization, Dr. Russo will want you to take 81 mg **Enteric-coated Aspirin** twice daily for four weeks following your surgery. Please purchase this on your own over the counter. The first dose can be taken the night of surgery. If you have a history of blood clots or a blood clotting disorder, you will require a stronger blood thinner. If you already take a blood thinner for a different reason, that medication will be continued after surgery instead of the aspirin. Be sure to clarify with your surgeon and your specific discharge instructions to verify your medications. The combination of Aspirin, compression stockings, walking, and exercise protocols are used to prevent blood clots in your legs and improve your mobility.
- **INCISION SITE AND SHOWERING:** Spotting of blood on the bandage is normal. You are permitted to shower once you arrive home after surgery. The incision is covered with a sticky, water resistant dressing. The dressing will be removed between 10-14 days after surgery at your first post-op appointment. If the dressing begins to come loose before that time but remains dry underneath, it can be re-enforced with a sticky Tegaderm film available at any local pharmacy. If you think it is possible that water has entered inside the dressing, please completely remove the dressing by gently peeling it off. If this occurs within the first 8 days gently clean the incision with soap and water, pat dry, and cover with sterile gauze and Tegaderm film, also which can be purchased at any local pharmacy. **You should not submerge your incision in a bathtub or pool until you are 6 weeks out from your surgery date.** Do not rub any ointments or creams on your incision for at least 1 month.

Please call the office at (480) 860-1322 if you have increased drainage on the incision site, if the dressing is saturated with blood, or your temperature is greater than 101.5 degrees Fahrenheit.

- **DIET:** You may eat a regular diet when you get home and drink plenty of fluids. Try to eat a healthy diet of protein, fiber and vegetables. An adult multivitamin is encouraged but please avoid your other supplements for the first week. Iron supplements may help restore your blood reserves as well but will exacerbate constipation. Avoid excessive alcohol intake especially in combination with pain medications and **DO NOT SMOKE**.
 - **DRIVING:** Right sided surgery will take longer to return to driving. Most patients may safely drive 2-3 weeks following your surgery. You should not drive while taking narcotic pain medications or if you still require a walker to assist with ambulation.
 - **ASSISTIVE DEVICES:** You may bear weight on your operated leg immediately as tolerated with a walker. Typically this is provided at discharge from the hospital or surgery center but some patients prefer to purchase or borrow their own ahead of time. As you recover and your risk for falls decreases, you will gradually transition to a cane, typically within the first 10 days. Some patients may require longer and often depends on their preoperative level of function and activity level. Please continue with your ambulatory aide if you still feel that you are unstable walking without it.
 - **PHYSICAL THERAPY:** You may be given a packet from the hospital or surgical facility with exercises you should do at home. You may also download an exercise handout or watch the videos by clicking on the recovery tab at www.matrussomd.com and inputting the password provided when you scheduled your surgery. Please do your exercises several times per day. You should be walking in your home at least every 1-2 hours. You are encouraged to walk outside accompanied by a family member or friend, weather permitting. Although most patients do not require formal physical therapy, some will choose to participate with outpatient therapy starting at 4-6 weeks after their surgery. Until then, we will focus more on simply improving your mobility on your own with the home exercises and transitioning from the walker to a cane until ultimately no ambulatory aides are necessary. The reasoning for this is to allow your muscles some time for convalescence and healing prior to strengthening.
 - **MULTIMODAL PAIN MANAGEMENT STRATEGY:** Dr. Russo has participated in extensive research in multimodal pain management strategies following joint replacement surgery. Multimodal refers to our ability to attack the pain pathway from multiple angles, rather than relying solely on narcotics. In addition to your spinal anesthesia, you will receive a number of medications in the preoperative bay which act to trick your body into not sending as many pain signals even before the surgery starts. In addition, a “cocktail” injection is also performed locally at the surgery site itself to reduce pain and swelling within the first 24 hours, allowing you to be safely discharged the same day as your procedure. After this injection wears off, the discomfort often worsens before it gets better. This means that your pain will likely peak within the first 3-4 days following your surgery before it starts to improve. Along with your exercises and frequent motion of the joint to prevent stiffness, please follow the medication formula below to assist with your pain and swelling management after surgery. It is important to stay ahead of the pain during these first few days. **Do not wait until you are in severe pain to take something.** Our research shows waiting too long will significantly decrease your ability to mobilize, thereby increasing your risk of blood clots and other complications as well as taking longer to bring your pain level back under control. Once you determine your individual formula, try to space apart the timing of the different medications to avoid several medications being administered at nearly the same time.
1. **Tylenol (acetaminophen):** This medication is safe for most all patients even with underlying medical conditions and potentiates with the other medications below in order to improve the effectiveness of the other methods of pain control. It also minimizes side effects of nausea and constipation by reducing the amount of narcotics needed to control your pain. Tylenol should be taken around the clock for the first two weeks following your surgery to the max amount of 4,000mg in a 24 hour period. Most patients take either 1000mg (extra strength) every 6-8 hours or 650mg (regular strength) every 4-6 hours. Please be aware that you may also be taking a narcotic pill that contains acetaminophen and therefore some adjustment may be needed to ensure you are not exceeding the 4,000mg limit.

2. **Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory- NSAIDs:** Most common examples are **Celebrex (Celecoxib)**, **Mobic (Meloxicam)**, **Aleve (Naproxen)**, or **Motrin (Ibuprofen)**. Do not combine any of the above. Often, either celecoxib or meloxicam will be prescribed, but if your insurance company rejects the medicine or if you find better relief with Aleve or ibuprofen, both are acceptable alternatives. These medications should be taken every 12 hours with food, typically with breakfast and dinner to prevent GI upset. These medicines help to control the pain and swelling associated with your surgery as well as prevent the formation of calcification within the muscle, termed heterotopic ossification. The dosage may vary based on the patient so be sure to check your discharge instructions. Over the counter Aleve or ibuprofen may follow the instructions on the bottle. **Patients with a history of chronic kidney disease, significant GI ulcer, or allergy to NSAIDs should not take these medications. If you develop stomach pains, please stop these medications as that may be an early warning of a GI ulcer.** Some patients with a mild history of the above or patients who are taking a high dose blood thinner may benefit from a lower dose and should be discussed in the office.
3. **Norco (Hydrocodone/acetaminophen) or Percocet (Oxycodone/acetaminophen):** One of these stronger narcotic pain medications will be prescribed to help manage the more severe pain over the initial course of your recovery. You should use this medication more frequently (every 4-6 hours) in the early stages of recovery to prevent getting behind the pain, but then wean off as the pain subsides, taking the medication less frequently. This tablet may also be split in half with a pill cutter if only a half-dose is desired. Typically, each tablet contains 325mg of acetaminophen and will need to be factored into your regimen of Tylenol to avoid exceeding the daily limit of 4000mg.
4. **Tramadol (Ultram)** is an opioid-derivative, mild type of narcotic that is sometimes used instead of the stronger medications above if the norco or percocet is too strong or if you are having significant side effects. Many patients find this medication useful to help with weaning off the stronger medicines.

PLEASE NOTE: Common side effects of narcotic medications include nausea/ vomiting, constipation, itchiness, and drowsiness. Please contact the office at (480) 860-1322 when you are running low on your pain medications, especially if you will run out over the weekend. New opioid restriction laws only allow for a limited number of tablets to be prescribed at any time so many patients will need a refill at some point during their recovery. **Please plan ahead and allow the office 1-2 days to process refills.**

5. **Flexeril (Cyclobenzaprine):** This is a muscle relaxant and may be prescribed to provide relief against the muscle spasms and tightness that commonly occur following surgery. This medication is not a narcotic but can be taken safely up to three times per day in addition to the above regimen but will increase sleepiness.
6. **Zofran (Ondansetron)** may be given to prevent the side effect of nausea. If you experience nausea while taking the pain medication you may use this for relief. A **Scopolamine patch** is also typically placed on your neck in the preoperative bay to assist with post-operative nausea. Remove the patch the second day after surgery, wash your hands, and avoid touching your eyes after handling the patch as the active ingredient causes your eyes to dilate.
7. **Stool softeners:** Constipation is very common following surgery. All patients are encouraged to purchase **Colace (docusate sodium)** on your own over the counter to be taken twice daily. **Miralax (polyethylene glycol)** is also suggested if you have not had a bowel movement within the first 2 days following surgery. Other tips include drinking plenty of water, increasing fiber intake, and walking frequently.
8. **Gabapentin or Lyrica (pregabalin)** may be prescribed for sleeplessness or nerve pain at your surgeon's discretion. Sleeplessness is a common side effect and is commonplace after the surgery. Symptoms of nerve pain include a tingling or burning sensation distal to your incision along the leg.
9. **Anti-histamine: Benadryl (diphenhydramine) or Claritin (loratadine)** may be purchased and taken in combination with the above medications to improve symptoms of itchiness as well as combat occasional mild intolerance to the adhesive dressing or if you develop a body rash after surgery.