

# Healing after hip & knee replacement



## Your Guide to Enhanced Recovery and Infection Prevention

### 1. Lower Your Hemoglobin A1c

Diabetic patients should consult their primary care doctor to make sure their blood sugar levels are ideal for surgery. High blood sugar levels decrease your body's ability to fight infection.

### 2. Quit Smoking

Patients who smoke get more infections and experience slower wound healing. It can be very hard to quit smoking, so Piedmont offers Courage to Quit classes. Visit <https://classes.inquicker.com/?ClientID=12422> and search "smoking" or call 877.527.3712 to register.

### 3. Increase Your Protein Intake

Protein helps promote healing and immune health, so we recommend you increase your protein intake by 30 grams a day for 5–7 days before and 30 days after surgery. View the Hip & Knee Guidebook for more information.

### 4. Clean Your Skin Before Surgery

Showering/bathing with a special soap that contains chlorhexidine gluconate (CHG) helps reduce the number of germs on your skin, which reduces your risk of getting an infection after surgery. Follow instructions to apply CHG soap (Hibiclens) from your neck to your toes, 2 days before and the morning of surgery.

<https://www.piedmont.org/media/file/Ortho-Preoperative-CHG-Bathing-Instructions.pdf>

### 5. Stop Shaving 24 Hours Before Surgery

Shaving can irritate your skin or make tiny breaks in the skin that make it easier for germs to cause an infection at your surgical site. Do not shave your legs the day before or the morning of surgery. If hair removal is needed, it will be removed by the surgical team with electric clippers just before surgery to reduce the risk of germ growth.

### 6. Ask About Nasal Swab Antiseptic and Pre-Op Warming

Applying a Betadine swab inside your nose at the hospital helps kill MRSA bacteria that may live in your nose. And if your body temperature drops too low before, during, or right after surgery, that can increase your risk of getting a post-surgery infection. Ask the pre-op team about these two precautions on the morning of surgery.

### 7. Clean Your Hands

Cleaning your hands can prevent the spread of germs. Always clean them before caring for your wound, and ask your provider/care team to do the same. Ask visitors to clean their hands before and after visiting you, and don't let them touch your wounds or dressing(s).



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# Enhanced Recovery After Surgery

This Enhanced Recovery after Surgery (ERAS) care plan was created for you by your Piedmont surgery and anesthesia teams. It helps to prepare your body for surgery, recover safely, and return home as soon as possible after your surgery. The ERAS care plan also speeds your recovery and lowers the chances of you having any post-surgery problems.

**Important:** Always follow hospital-provided instructions for eating and drinking before surgery. Patients with diabetes and other medical conditions may stop food and clear liquid intake sooner. If you are taking a GLP-1 agonist (ex: Trulicity, Ozempic, Wegovy) for weight loss or diabetes management, follow instructions from your surgeon's office or hospital nurse.

## What should I do before surgery?

- DRINK one 36-oz high-carbohydrate drink of your choice at bedtime the night before surgery (zero-sugar option if you're diabetic)
- STOP food intake 8 hours before your scheduled surgery
- CONTINUE drinking CLEAR liquids until 3 hours before surgery
- DRINK one 20-oz. bottle of a high-carbohydrate drink of your choice on the morning of surgery (zero-sugar option if you're diabetic)
  - Make sure you are finished drinking it 3 hours before surgery
  - If you are unable to drink 20 ounces, stop when you feel full
- STOP drinking water and clear liquids 3 hours before your surgery

## What is a CLEAR liquid?

A clear liquid is anything you can see through, such as:

- Water
- Tea
- Apple juice
- Pulp-free fruit juice
- Ginger ale
- Sprite
- Jell-O
- Popsicles
- Clear broths (chicken, vegetable, beef)

You can drink black coffee with sugar, but NO creamer.

## What is a high-carbohydrate drink?

Commercially available high-carbohydrate drinks, like Gatorade or Powerade, will give you extra nutrition while you are fasting from solid food before surgery. If you are diabetic, you will drink a commercially available low-sugar sports drink such as G2 or Powerade Zero.

## How will my pain be managed after surgery?

ERAS care plans are designed to minimize negative side effects from commonly used pain medications that can lead to prolonged hospital stays and can make recovery after surgery difficult. Since the underlying cause of pain is inflammation, medications that treat inflammation may be an important part of your pain management plan. Your surgeon and anesthesia team will work with you to find the combination of medications that will be best for you.

## What should I expect after surgery?

When the nurse tells you it's safe to do so, you need to get out of bed, sit in a chair, and walk as soon as possible. Moving as soon as you can after surgery helps decrease your risk of complications, shortens your recovery time, and helps you return to your pre-surgery baseline sooner. While you're in the hospital, your nurse or physical therapist will help you move around safely. Your care team will tell you when you can start drinking fluids and eating solid food, and when it is safe for you to go home.



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