

Hip replacement surgery

Introduction

The Covid pandemic has had a significant impact on the ability of the NHS to provide some routine services. We recognise that patients are waiting longer than we would all like and it is not always possible to identify when treatment will take place. This document provides you with information on how you can support yourself while waiting to attend the hospital.

You don't need to ring your GP, or the hospital caring for you for an update on waiting times because all the information is available on the My Planned Care website.

This guidance has been supported by clinicians who are responsible for your care to support and to help keep you well whilst waiting for your procedure.

Guidance for Patients

A hip replacement is a common type of surgery where a worn or damaged hip joint is replaced with an artificial one. Replacement surgery is highly successful in reducing the pain and debilitating effects of worn or damaged hip joints. The operation involves replacing both the natural socket (the acetabulum) and the natural ball at the top of the thigh bone (femur) with artificial parts made of metal or plastic.

Hip replacement surgery will only be offered to you after other options have been tried and have not relieved your symptoms. This would include medication to relieve the pain, weight loss if necessary, physiotherapy, and exercise to reduce stiffness and improve muscle strength and the use of walking aids.

Patients can go home as soon after surgery as they are deemed fit medically and they can cope with mobilising safely. This may be on the day of surgery or any time from the day after surgery. Some patients will have hip replacement surgery as a day case, meaning they don't have to stay in hospital overnight. Not every patient having a hip replacement is suitable for day case surgery but if you are a candidate this will have been discussed with you by your consultant.

Lifestyle

We would encourage anyone waiting for surgery to lose some weight if necessary and to stop smoking. Both these measures are known to lower risk of complications following surgery.

Losing weight is not about getting it right – it's about getting started. Making small, simple changes can really help you shed the pounds. Get started today with our tips, support and specialist offers.

You can download a [free NHS weight loss planning app](#) to help you start healthier eating habits, be more active and start losing weight.

My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

Smoking

If you are coming into hospital for a procedure, and you are a smoker, we strongly advise you to stop smoking as soon as possible because this will help to improve wound healing, lung function and you will make the best possible recovery. Now is a better time than ever to stop smoking. Smoking before procedure puts you at a higher risk for post-operative heart attacks, stroke, blood clots, pneumonia and even death.

With help, you're much more likely to quit smoking than if you use willpower alone. Visit [Make Smoking History](#) to get free access to the latest quitting aids, one-to-one advice and [support in your local area](#)

Alcohol

Alcohol can have many effects on your body but importantly it can reduce your body's ability to heal. Make sure you are drinking within the recommended limits or lower to improve your ability to heal after your procedure.

Exercise

Whilst you are waiting for your surgery stay as active as you can. Strengthening the muscles around your hip will help your recovery. If you can, continue to do gentle exercise such as walking and swimming, in the weeks and months before your operation.

Versus Arthritis has produced a handy guide to exercise for hip pain – "[Exercises for hip pain](#)". You may be referred to a physiotherapist who will give you helpful exercises. Here are some examples:

Active Hip Flexion

1. Stand up straight holding on to a wall or a chair
2. Lift your affected leg up in front of you as far as you can comfortably manage
3. Do not bring your leg up more than 90 degrees
4. Return to the starting position
5. Repeat 10 times x 3 times a day

Active hip abduction

1. Stand up straight holding on to a wall or a chair
2. Keep your affected leg straight and lift it to the side as far as you can comfortably manage
3. Do not lean your body
4. Return to the starting position
5. Repeat 10 times x 3 times a day

Active hip abduction

1. Stand up straight holding on to a wall or a chair
2. Keep your affected leg straight and lift it to the side as far as you can comfortably manage
3. Do not lean your body
4. Return to the starting position
5. Repeat 10 times x 3 times a day

My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

Active Hip extension

1. Stand up straight holding on to a wall or a chair
2. Keeping your affected leg straight, lift it back behind you as far as you can comfortably manage
3. Do not lean your body
4. Return to the starting position
5. Repeat 10 times x 3 times a day

Bridge

1. Lie on your back with your legs bent and feet flat on the floor
2. Engage your core, and then start to lift your hips up into a bridge carefully starting at your tailbone, driving the movement with your buttocks. Repeat the movement with your other leg.
3. Keep your hips up and level and your neck and shoulders relaxed
4. Carefully lower your back from the top of your spine down to your tailbone
5. Repeat this 10 times x 3 times a day

Pain Management:

You can take pain relief such as Paracetamol, Anti-inflammatory creams, Codeine, Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs. If you need any advice, your local pharmacy will be able to help.

There are a number of resources to help you manage your pain:

- [10 ways to ease pain](#)
- The Chartered Institute of Physiotherapy has produced helpful [guidance for managing pain and improving your quality of life](#)

Mental health support:

It's important during this time to take care of your mind as well as your body. You might be feeling down, worried or anxious while you wait for your surgery.

Here you will find some [general information on mental health issues](#) and some [top tips to improve your mental wellbeing](#). Apps to support your health, mental health and wellbeing:

- Find tested and approved mental health apps [here](#).
- [Feeling anxious?](#)
- [Feeling stressed?](#)
- [Feeling low?](#)
- [Trouble sleeping?](#)

My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

This information is designed to help you manage your symptoms and stay in the best possible health while you wait. It is however possible that some of your symptoms may get worse while you are waiting for your surgery. There are some things to look out for that would indicate you should seek medical help:

1. If your pain gets worse to the point that it is unmanageable with the pain relief suggested by the pharmacist or doctor and you are struggling to cope with it;
2. If your mobility gets worse to the point you are off your feet or unable to work;
3. If your hip deteriorates suddenly

If you experience any of these issues we would recommend getting in touch with your hospital team. The number and email should be on your last hospital appointment letter.

Alternatively, you can contact your GP practice. Whilst your GP does not have access to the hospital waiting list to get you seen sooner, if your condition is getting worse they can assess you, give advice and can contact the hospital on your behalf if necessary.

Links to more information

[NHS England information about hip replacement surgery](#) [Versus Arthritis information about hip replacement surgery](#)