



ORTHOPEDIC PHYSICIANS
ALASKA

A division of OrthoAlaska

Joint Replacement Roadmap

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Welcome

Having surgery to replace a joint is a very big decision. We are here to help you feel as comfortable and prepared as possible. This book will assist you with preparing for surgery, recovery and rehabilitation, and returning to your usual activities.

What does it take to get ready?

- Be your healthiest and prepare mentally
- Make plans to have help after surgery
- Get your home ready

What is Joint Replacement Surgery?

Joint replacement is a surgery to replace your painful arthritic joint with an artificial joint. Actively participating in Physical Therapy helps you regain movement and strength with your new joint to get you back to activity as usual.

2 months before surgery

Try to be your healthiest both mentally and physically

- **Quit Tobacco**-This is one of the most important things you can do when preparing for surgery. Tobacco use slows healing and increases risk of complications. Studies have shown that patients using tobacco before and after Joint Replacement surgery are 10 times more likely to need a joint revision surgery when compared to non-smokers.
- **Lose extra weight**-Maintaining a healthy weight can reduce post-operative complications and make assist in better mobility before and after joint replacement. Always check with your primary care provider before beginning a new exercise regimen or diet.
- **If you have Diabetes**-Work closely with your primary care provider to be sure your HgA1C and glucose levels are under control and optimal for surgery.
- **Dental Work**-Complete any dental work well in advance of surgery. Any active mouth infections, broken teeth, or open wounds need to be cleared at least 6 weeks prior to surgery.
- **Be Active**-Being as active as possible before surgery will help you maintain mobility and build strength for recovery after your joint has been replaced. Water exercises, walking and recumbent bikes are great options with low impact on painful joints.
- **Start planning help after surgery**-Your support person/people will need to stay with you at least the first 5-7 days after surgery.
- **FMLA/Short Term Disability Paperwork**-Email to oparecords@opaak.com. They will forward to your care team.

2 weeks before surgery

Get your home ready for recovery.

- Make it as easy and safe to move around as possible. Remove any tripping hazards.
- Create clear pathways that are wide enough for crutches or a walker
- If your bedroom is on the second floor, think about making a space to recover and rest on the first floor.
- Set up an area that will allow you to elevate your feet above your heart. Being able to properly elevate will reduce swelling.
- Think about installing grab bars in your bathroom and other safety equipment you may want. Ex: Shower chairs, toilet seat riser. These can be purchased at any local pharmacy or drug store.
- Place items you use regularly in easily assessable areas or within reach of your primary resting area.

Stay Healthy and Prevent Infections

- Wash your hands often. Stay away from friends or family that have been sick or are currently unwell.
- Do not participate in activities that could result in cuts or scrapes to your surgical site. Any skin breaks, abrasions, rashes, etc. could result in a delay of surgery.
- Follow your primary care providers recommendations and be sure you are taking any prescribed medications as directed to maintain peak health before surgery.

1 Week Before Surgery

Follow instructions from your preop appointment as well as these additional instructions

- Stop taking certain vitamins and supplements.
- Only take medications that have been approved and prescribed by your healthcare providers and surgical team.
- Do not shave or wax your surgical site at all. Even small cuts or nicks can result in a delay of surgery.
- Start showering daily 5 days before surgery. You will be provided with a germ fighting soap at your preop appointment. Use that soap the day before and morning of surgery.
- Prepare meals ahead of time to make things easier during your recovery.
- Call your physical therapy location to be sure your appointments are made and ready for your post-operative rehab.
- If you develop any fevers, coughs or infections, notify your providers team immediately.
- Prepare your Game Ready Ice Machine to bring with you to your surgical facility. If this machine has been ordered for you, it will be delivered to you by Alaska Medical Solutions. If your game ready unit has not been delivered, please call 907-563-4401.
- Run any errands that may make things easier for yourself after surgery such as grocery store, animal food, prescription refills, etc.

Day Before & Morning of Surgery

Enhance your recovery and prevent infection

- Do not eat anything after midnight the night before surgery.
- Drink plenty of water and clear liquids. This will give you energy and help you feel hydrated for surgery. This can also help reduce constipation after surgery.
- Shower with your germ fighting the night before and morning of surgery. Use this soap from the neck down, be sure to avoid contact with your face and genital area. Pour a small amount of the soap onto a fresh and clean washcloth with warm water and wash your body for at least 5 minutes to ensure maximum results.
- Avoid lotions, soaps, perfumes and deodorants at this time to ensure your skin stays prepped and clean.
- Avoid sleeping with any pets to reduce the risk of scratches, rashes or infections.

What to bring with you the day of surgery

- Picture ID and Proof of Insurance
- Any copayment that has been requested by your surgical facility
- List of medications
- Eyeglasses and hearing aids
- Container for dentures or retainers. Any dentures or retainers will be removed prior to surgery.
- Comfortable clothes, robe or pillow for use after surgery
- Personal hygiene items. (toothbrush, toothpaste, brush)
- Cell phone and charger
- CPAP Machines-if scheduled to stay overnight
- Game Ready Ice Machine
- Walker or crutches

What do I leave at home?

- Your Medications-you will be provided your medications during your stay
- All Valuables-Jewelry, wallets, money, wedding rings, etc.

Contact Information for local resources

Orthopedic Physicians Alaska

907-357-2267

Surgical Facilities:

Matsu Regional Medical Center: 907-861-6000

Surgery Center of Wasilla: 907-631-3578

Medical Equipment:

Alaska Medical Solutions: 907-563-4401

- Game Ready/CPMs

Turn a Leaf: 907-376-5708

- Used medical equipment-walkers/crutches

Procure Home Medical Equipment: 907-357-7882

- Medical equipment-walkers, crutches, toilet seat risers, grab bars, etc.