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Hip Resurfacing FAQs

Q. How long will I be on crutches?

A. You will be on two crutches for 3 weeks to protect the hip resurfacing and your femur bone. After 3 weeks, you may transition to a single cane or crutch. Generally, patients are able to walk as much as they want by 6 weeks post-operatively

Q. What if any restrictions will I have after surgery and how long do they last?

A. I ask that you do not lift anything heavier than 20 lbs for the first 3 months. I also ask you to avoid any impact activities for 6 months. At 8 weeks, patients are able to resume playing golf and swimming; at 12 weeks, they may play tennis. Dr. Dolan will help you decide what activities you may resume.

Q. When can I return to work?

A. It depends on your occupation. It is never a mistake to take more time off in the beginning of your recovery, as it will give you time to focus on your hip. Some patients return to work in 1-2 weeks if they are able to work from home. I recommend taking at least 3 weeks off for a single resurfacing, and 6 weeks for a double. Keep in mind that you may still be using crutches and it may be difficult to commute.

Q. When can I drive?

A. You should not drive as long as you are taking narcotic pain medication. If it is your left hip, you can resume driving when you feel your reaction times are back to normal (about 3 weeks). If it is your right hip, I would like to evaluate you prior to your return to driving.

Q. How long should I use the pain medication?

A. This is different for each patient; some are able to use Tylenol after you leave the hospital, and others require pain medication as needed for 2-3 weeks. A general rule is that you should try to decrease your use of these medications as time passes.

Q. When can I shower?

A. You can shower as soon as you get home if you have dissolvable stitches; if I felt that you would be better served with staples, then you will have completely cover the staples

before showering, or wait until they are removed (10-14 days postop). With either stitches or staples, do not immerse the incision in water, and just pat it dry.

Q. When should I go to outpatient therapy?

A. I like to see you in follow up before you go as an outpatient; that way I can tailor your PT to what you need. However, if you feel that it is essential that you begin outpatient PT right away, you can call my office and we will provide a prescription and a list of places.

Q. I feel "clicking" inside the hip, is this normal?

A. The clicking is a result of the soft tissue (capsule) moving across the front of the hip, or the metal parts coming into contact with one another. This sensation usually diminishes as your muscles get stronger.

Q. Can I work out in the gym?

A. You can go to the gym and resume upper body workouts, as long as the hip is in a non-loaded position (you should be sitting, not standing, when using weights).

Q. When can I go to the dentist?

A. Please wait until 3 months after surgery, as the hip is still healing and there is increased blood flow to this area. You will need to take antibiotics prior to a dental visit.

Q. Should I be taking any medications or supplements for bone health after a resurfacing?

A. Yes, I recommend that everyone take calcium and vitamin D to help maintain bone strength. Generally 1000-1500 mg of calcium citrate and 400 IU of Vitamin D are adequate. Occasionally I will also prescribe a medication to help promote bone strength.

Q. Can I travel?

A. In general, I like to see you before you fly. If you are traveling by car, you should be sure to take frequent breaks so that you don't feel too stiff when getting up. On an airplane, I like you to wear compression stockings (if within 1 month postop), and take a couple of walks during the flight. Having an aisle and bulkhead seat will help you get more space.

Q. Do I need a special card to tell the airport screeners that I have a metal implant?

A. You do not need a card to get through the airport; however, your implant will likely set off the metal detector. In this day and age, you will need to be hand-screened, so

please leave extra time when you travel. We do provide an implant card for your convenience, which will be available postoperatively.

Q. Can I get an MRI?

A. Yes, MRIs are perfectly safe with a hip resurfacing implant. An MRI in the area of the hip implant, however, will not yield good pictures because of artifact created by the metal. MRI of a hip resurfacing should be performed at a facility with experience with techniques used to suppress the metal artifact.