BEFORE SURGERY

What should I do to prepare for my surgery?

- Arrange for a family member or friend to accompany you to the hospital on the day of your surgery.
- Cancel any dental appointments that fall within 6 weeks before and 3 months after your scheduled surgery.
- You will be discharged from the hospital as discussed previously, so plan ahead to have someone available for transportation home on the day of your discharge.
- Arrange for someone to stay with you at home after the surgery.
- Remember to adjust your work/social schedule accordingly during your anticipated recovery.
- Remove small throw rugs or other obstacles from your home.
- If you have pets, you may want to arrange for someone to assist in caring for them for a few days after you return home.
- While taking narcotic pain medication you will not be permitted to drive.
- Your follow-up appointment should be arranged prior to surgery. If you have questions or need to reschedule your appointment, please call the clinic schedulers at 425-673-3900.

What if I have a sensitivity to metal or jewelry?

Most hip and knee implants contain a small amount of nickel, which may cause a reaction in individuals with a history of metal sensitivity.

Fine jewelry is rarely reactive, but cheaper watches, bracelets, rings, earrings and necklaces often contain nickel.

If you have a known metal allergy or a history of reaction/irritation where metal jewelry has come into contact with your skin, please inform Dr Christal directly during one of your preoperative appointments.

Should I get the Flu Vaccine before surgery?

Do not take Flu-Mist (intra-nasal vaccine). This is a live, attenuated vaccine that can result in mild illness, which can be spread to other immuno-compromised hospital patients.

If you do receive the Flu-Mist vaccine, it should be at least 2 weeks before or after surgery.

Do not receive the standard, injected flu vaccine within one week of surgery.

Can I drink alcohol the night before surgery?

Please do not drink alcohol the night before your surgery. This can interfere with your anesthetic on the day of surgery.

Do I have to donate blood before surgery?

Many patients ask about donating their own blood prior to surgery or a family member donating blood for
them. Typically, we do not require this before surgery. New techniques in preserving blood or even getting your own blood back have prevented the need for you donating prior to surgery.

**Do I need to quit smoking?**
We recommend that all of our patients do their best to quit smoking. Nicotine use has been linked to delayed healing and increases the risk of infection. Is it absolutely necessary for your surgery? Of course not. We are not trying to change your life; we are just trying to return you to the highest function, as soon as possible.

**How many days will I be in the hospital?**
Following knee or hip replacement, most patients stay in the hospital for 1-2 nights. This depends in large part on your pre-operative level of fitness and motivation. The important thing is to go home when you feel safe and your pain is well controlled. We will do our best at the hospital to prepare you for home and if that is not possible, a rehabilitation center may be necessary. Regardless, you will return home when you are ready and not before.

**How much recovery time do I need after my hip replacement surgery?**
When you discharge home, our goal is to get you walking and moving as quickly as possible. You will be caring for yourself, getting in and out of bed by yourself and certainly using the bathroom on your own. By 2-3 weeks after surgery we expect you to be walking well with minimal pain. In some, this may still require the assistance of a cane or walker, but simply for balance. Six weeks after hip replacement, we will allow you to return to most occupations and activities that you enjoy such as golf, simple walking or even bicycling. Three months after hip replacement surgery you are starting to participate in a full round of golf or tennis.

**How much recovery time do I need for my knee arthroscopic surgery?**
After most arthroscopic surgery we encourage you to walk right away. Specifically, if we did not repair or reconstruct tissue in your knee, it is important to get it moving and return to your activities as soon as possible. That said, you should expect to take it easy for the first 2-3 days. By 7-10 days, you should be walking well. Six weeks after surgery we will allow you to return to all of your activities, including running, jogging, football, softball, tennis, golf, etc. It is important to understand-recovery time may vary depending on the severity of the injury and/or the extent of surgery and it may take several months to achieve maximal improvement. For example, if a meniscus repair or micro fracture surgery has been done, you will be instructed NOT to put full weight on your leg for up to eight weeks.

**How much recovery time do I need for my knee replacement surgery?**
When you discharge home, our goal is to get you walking and moving as quickly as possible. You will be caring for yourself, getting in and out of bed by yourself and certainly using the bathroom on your own. By 2-3 weeks after surgery we expect you to be walking well with minimal pain. In some, this may still require the assistance of a cane or walker, but simply for balance. Six weeks after hip replacement, we will allow
you to return to most occupations and activities that you enjoy such as golf, simple walking or even bicycling. Three months after knee replacement surgery you are starting to participate in moderate exercise, such as a full round of golf. We recommend against high impact activities such as running, singles tennis, or aggressive alpine skiing. Our goal is for your knee replacement to last as long as possible.

**How much time do I need to take off work following arthroscopy?**
Following arthroscopy of the knee or hip we hope to get you back to work when your pain is controlled. Depending on your job description, this could be as early as two to three or even four days. What is important is returning to work when you feel you can do your job safely and your pain is controlled. Arthroscopy that involves weight-bearing joints may require additional time off work depending on the extent of the surgery and the physical demands that are required for the patient to function at his or her job.

**How much time do I need to take off work following hip replacement surgery?**
Following hip replacement surgery, we try to return you to work as soon as possible. This may be as early as two weeks, depending on your job description. Obviously, if you are able to sit at a desk or do minimal walking in a day, two to three weeks is certainly very reasonable. However, if you are required to be on your feet all day or walk extensively, this could take six or eight weeks. Our goal is to get you back to work when you are safe and your pain is controlled.

**How much time do I need to take off work following knee replacement surgery?**
Following knee replacement surgery, it may be necessary to take three to six weeks off work, depending on the physical demands of your job. If you are only required to sit at a desk, we can get you back to work as early as two to three weeks. However, if you are required to stand on your feet all day or do an extensive amount of walking, this could take six or eight weeks. Every patient, of course, is not the same but we will certainly monitor your progress in physical therapy and encourage you to return to work when your pain is controlled and you are safe.

**Is Dr. Christal performing my surgery?**
Many patients ask who will be performing the surgery. Dr. Christal is the only one who will be performing your surgery. For some surgeries, we do use assistants to hold or retract tissue and sometimes pass surgical instruments.

**Is my surgery going to hurt?**
Surgery of the hip and knee can certainly be painful. In fact, we expect pain after surgery. However, we make every effort to keep it at a reasonable level. We utilize a combination of many medications, all working to reduce your pain from a different angle. Pain medication will be provided postoperatively and sometimes requires adjustment.
**Why do I have to stop eating/drinking the night before my surgery?**

It is important not to eat after midnight the night before surgery. Any food or water in your stomach can lead to anesthetic complications. Please be sure not to have any food or drink unless directed by your physician or anesthesia prior to surgery. Generally, medications that are recommended to be taken prior to surgery or pain pills can be taken with a small sip of water on the morning of surgery, but please ask someone in the office or the person taking your pre-operative information.

**What kind of anesthesia will I have? Is it possible to have a spinal or local?**

There are several different types of anesthesia for your surgery. "General" anesthesia is given through a tube in your throat or mouth. "Spinal" anesthesia uses a single shot in the lower back to the legs. Occasionally local anesthetic can be injected into the surgical site, sometimes combined with IV sedation to make you relax during the procedure. Prior to your surgery you will meet the anesthesiologist. It is important to discuss the type of anesthetic you will receive at that time. During hip and knee replacement, spinal anesthesia is most commonly used at our institution and allows for a faster postoperative recovery when compared to "general" anesthesia.

**What do I need to bring to the hospital?**

When you come to the hospital prior to surgery, please bring comfortable clothing, please bring a list of your medications and have arrangements for your ride home.

**What medications do I need to stop taking and when do they need to be stopped?**

It is very important that you have an accurate list of your medications prior to surgery. We will be able to tell you what medications to stop. This typically includes medications that will cause your blood to be thinner. Please bring the list with you prior to surgery.

**What will I be given for pain?**

Following surgery, you will be given pain medication. It is important that you take the medication when you need it. Our goal is to minimize or have no side effects while controlling your pain. Often, we may need to change that medication if it is not working. Please be patient with us and we will find the right medication for you.

**Why do I have to stop taking vitamins/over-the-counter supplements?**

Some vitamins and supplements can thin your blood. This may result in more bleeding during the procedure. We will typically restart vitamins and supplements once you are off the blood thinner medication postoperatively.

**Why is it important to obtain a preoperative clearance from my family doctor? Why can’t I just get my pre-ops done in the hospital?**

Preoperative clearance is very important. There is no one that knows you better than the doctor who has
been taking care of you. We want to make sure your lungs, heart and kidneys are all working as best as they can be before surgery.

**Will I need crutches, a brace or a sling?**
Typically, patients are encouraged to bear all of their weight immediately after surgery. However, there are circumstances where we may find something during surgery, prompting us to restrict your weight bearing or wear a brace.

**What is home health care?**
Home health care will involve a registered nurse coming out to your home following discharge from the hospital. The registered nurse will work to evaluate your wound, assess your vitals and follow your medication. Home health physical therapy should start the day following your discharge. The physical therapist will work to reduce swelling, regain your range of motion and restore your normal gait with the use of assistive equipment like a front wheeled walker or a cane. They will also answer any and all questions in regard to physical therapy.