

Preparing for Surgery

Visit Your Family Doctor

Just like any other camp, you will need to complete a physical at your family doctor's office before coming to Joint Camp. Your orthopaedic surgeon (bone doctor) will help you set up the visit with your family doctor before you are scheduled for surgery.

Your family doctor will examine you to make sure your body is healthy enough to undergo surgery. This may involve blood work, X-rays and an EKG (a simple test to make sure your heart is working properly). Your physical and blood work need to be completed within 14 days before your surgery.

This physical is important – it will tell us if you are healthy or if you have any issues that could interfere with your body's ability to heal after surgery. Your doctor will let you know if any of your test results are abnormal and will consult with your orthopaedic surgeon. All results will be sent to your surgical team so they are on your hospital chart at the time of your procedure.

Your orthopaedic surgeon and family doctor will also want to know about all of the medicine (prescription and over-the-counter), vitamins and supplements you take at home. You will need to stop taking all blood-thinning medicines, including most anti-inflammatory drugs, before surgery. There may be other medicines, vitamins or supplements you will need to stop or change before surgery. Please bring a complete list of medicines with you to your appointments. Your doctors will go over your list of medications and tell you which ones need to be stopped before your surgery.

Contact Your Insurance Company

Before surgery, we suggest you contact your insurance company to find out if pre-authorization, pre-certification, a second opinion or a referral form is required (your family doctor's office may do this on your behalf). It is very important to make this call because failure to do so may result in a reduction of benefits or a delay in surgery. You will also want to ask about deductibles, co-pays for outpatient therapy sessions (knee patients) and if your insurance has a network system.



Choose a Coach

Your coach is an important part of your team. He or she is the support person who will help you with your exercises, daily living activities and transportation needs as you recover from surgery. Many patients choose their spouse or other family member to be their coach, but you may select anyone you feel comfortable with and is willing and able to help you. If necessary, the coach role can be shared among individuals if one person is not available for all of the group activities.

Come Prepared

Before you can attend Joint Camp, you must know more about what to expect. The more informed you are, the better your stay will be. You will be less anxious and more willing to take an active role in your recovery and rehabilitation after surgery.

You and your coach will be scheduled to attend a preoperative education class about Joint Camp. It is strongly encouraged that you attend this class because it will give you a better idea of what to expect before, during and after your surgery. It will also help your coach learn more about his or her role. Before coming to class, it is important for you and your coach to carefully read this guide. If you have questions, write them down and bring them to class with you. If you have any questions or concerns before coming to Joint Camp, you may also call (515) 643-BONE or e-mail jointcamp@mercydesmoines.org.

Finally, you are encouraged to practice doing the exercises listed in the “**Camp Exercise**” section of this guide. These exercises are key to your recovery; you must learn them and do them regularly in order to get the most out of your stay at Joint Camp. We encourage you to do 10-20 repetitions of exercises #1-7 once or twice daily. Be sure to do these exercises on both legs. If any exercise causes sharp or shooting pain, do not do that particular exercise. It is normal to feel achy afterward; you are exercising muscles you are not used to using.

While you are at Joint Camp, you will combine these exercises with the “**Walk Around America**” activity. Stations are set up throughout the unit, each with an activity unique to a specific part of the country. By “traveling” between states and doing these activities, you will meet your therapy goals while having fun.

Pre-Surgery Checklist

Four Weeks before Surgery:

- Start taking a multivitamin once daily (ask your family doctor or a pharmacist to recommend one that is good for you). If your doctor recommends it, you may also need to take an iron supplement to enrich your blood.
- Complete the “**Personal Health Record/Personal Medication Record**”; you will find it with this handbook. Use a pencil in case you need to change or correct your list. Be sure to fill out the form entirely. List the name of each drug (prescribed and over-the-counter), vitamin or supplement you take. Write down the strength or dosage of each and how often you take them. Once completed, keep it near your phone. **The surgery staff will review this information during your pre-assessment phone call.**

Two to Three Weeks before Surgery:

- Stop taking all herbal supplements – including echinacea, ginger, ginseng, ginkgo biloba, garlic, glucosamine, fish oil, St. John’s wort, kava and others. If you take an extra mega-dose of vitamin E, you will also need to stop taking this. All of these things can impair blood clotting and/or interact with other medicines that may be prescribed for you.

One Week before Surgery:

- Stop taking all anti-inflammatory medicines (with the exception of Celebrex®). This includes aspirin, ibuprofen (Motrin®), naproxen (Aleve®), diclofenac (Voltaren®), meloxicam (Mobic®) and many other types of arthritis medicines. These medicines may increase your bleeding time. If you do not stop taking these medicines at least seven days before surgery, you risk having it postponed. If aspirin has been prescribed by a doctor to treat a medical condition, you will need to check with that doctor to find out when you should stop taking it.
- Stop taking blood-thinning medicines, such as Coumadin®, Plavix® and Aggrenox®. The doctor who prescribed this medicine will need to give you special instructions on how to stop taking it.
- Ask your doctor whether you need to stop taking other medicines you use. Your doctor will tell you which medicines can be taken up until the day of surgery.

Expect a Phone Call:

Mercy's Surgery Department will call you for a pre-surgery assessment interview the week of your surgery. They are starting your hospital chart for you and what you tell them in this interview will be added to your chart. Have your completed **“Personal Health Record/Personal Medication Record”** ready; you will be asked questions that can be answered with the information you have written on this form.

Surgery staff will tell you when to arrive at the hospital. They will also tell you which of your medications are okay to take with a sip of water the morning of surgery. You will also be asked if you have a **living will and/or a medical power of attorney**. If so, make sure you bring copies with you to the hospital so they can be included in your chart.

A Few Days before Surgery:

- Get your house ready for your return home. Follow the **“Prepare Your Home”** checklist on the next page to help make sure your house is as safe and comfortable as possible for your recovery.
- Pack for Joint Camp. Read **“What to Bring to Camp”** and pack accordingly.
- If you have a walker, put it in the trunk of your car. We will make sure it is working correctly and fit to your body before you are discharged. If you do not have a walker, you do not need to purchase one now. Insurance will only pay for a walker the day you are discharged from the hospital. We will make sure you are given a walker before you leave the hospital.

The Night before Surgery:

- Do not eat or drink anything after midnight – including water – unless otherwise instructed to do so. Do not use any tobacco products, chewing gum, candy or lozenges after midnight.
- Try to get plenty of rest.

Prepare **Your Home**

Follow this checklist to help prepare your house for your return home.

- Clean, do the laundry and put it away. Put clean linens on your bed.
- Perform any yard work or arrange to have it done.
- Ask someone to collect your mail and take care of your pets or loved ones, if needed.
- Move furniture as needed to provide easy access to the bedroom, bathroom and kitchen with a walker. You may need to ask someone to help you.
- Make sure all walkways are free of clutter. Pick up all throw rugs and tack down any loose carpeting.
- Remove electric/phone cords from walkways or tape them to the floor.
- Consider having nightlights in the bedroom, bathrooms and hallways.
- Your mattress should be firm. You may need to place a piece of plywood between the box spring and mattress to make your bed firmer. This is recommended for those having their hip replaced.
- Prepare meals ahead of time; freeze them in single-serving containers.
- Put cooking supplies and utensils in a place that is easy to reach.
- If you have a tub/shower combo in your bathroom, consider taking off the doors and using a tension rod with a shower curtain. This will make it easier to get in and out of the shower.
- Find a chair in your home that will allow you to sit down comfortably and stand up easily (dining room chairs with arms are ideal).

Anticipate other needs you may have. For example, if your bedroom is on the upper level of your house, you may wish to prepare a sleeping area on the main level to use when you first come home. Even if you plan to stay with someone or go somewhere else instead of your own home when you are discharged, you will eventually be returning to your house, so plan ahead. If you need any other equipment for your home, we can help you locate and learn how to use them while you are in the hospital.

What to **Bring to Camp**

Follow this checklist to pack for Joint Camp.

Please bring:

- Your smile, patience and determination
- A positive attitude
- Three outfits of loose-fitting clothing (T-shirts and shorts, sweat pants or loungewear with elastic waistbands or drawstrings work best). We encourage wearing shorts if you are having knee surgery. Both men and women attend camp, so plan for modesty.
- Two sets of nightclothes for sleeping, if you prefer not to sleep in your day clothes. Hospital gowns are also available for night time use.
- A sweater or long-sleeved sweatshirt to layer for warmth
- Four to five pairs of underwear (hip replacement patients should bring underwear that is one size bigger than normal to avoid putting pressure on their incision)
- Comfortable slip-on or walking shoes (make sure they are wide enough to allow for some swelling on your operative leg and are not too loose). No flip-flop sandals or Crocs, please.
- Personal hygiene products (soap, shampoo, toothbrush, toothpaste, electric razor, hair dryer)
- Your insurance card, prescription card (if you have one) and a photo ID
- This Joint Camp Patient Education Handbook
- Your completed **“Personal Health Record/Personal Medication Record”**

If you have them, please bring the following, as well:

- Walker
- Case for dentures
- Eyeglasses/contact lenses and case
- Eye drops, inhaler
- CPAP or breathing machine
- Copies of your living will and/or medical power of attorney

Please leave at home:

- Jewelry and valuables
- Credit cards
- Large amounts of cash
- Medicines other than those listed above. Mercy will provide any medications you need during your stay.
- Any valuables that you bring may be locked up in Mercy’s Public Safety Department.