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After Hip Replacement: Recovering in the Hospital

You will be moved to your room when you are awake. You can expect to feel some pain. To gain the best pain relief, answer honestly when you are asked how much you hurt. Once you have been shown how to protect your hip, you will learn the skills needed to return to normal life. You'll be taught how to walk, sit, and dress. To make moving easier, ask for pain medications before each training session.

In Your Hospital Room

You'll be watched closely on the day of surgery. Any or all of the equipment below may be provided for your safety and comfort.

- ⋄ **A foam wedge**, a brace, or pillows may be used to keep your new hip in place during early healing.
- ⋄ **A bar** (trapeze) may be hanging over the bed. Use it to help lift your body when you change positions.
- ⋄ **Special stockings** may be used to reduce the risk of blood clots. You may also be given medication to help prevent clots.

Managing Pain

At first you may feel pain, even with medication. This is normal. But if your pain is not reduced at all, be sure to tell the nurse. Pain medication may be injected into a muscle or delivered by IV into the bloodstream.

You're in Control with PCA

PCA (patient-controlled analgesia) allows you to control your own pain medication. When you push a button, pain medication is pumped through an IV line. PCA pumps can provide a steady level of pain relief. And with their built-in safety features, you can be assured that you will not get too much medication.

Walking Again

You may begin to stand and walk within hours after surgery. An IV and catheter are likely to still be in place, so using the walker may be a little tricky. But don't worry. A physical therapist will help you. You will be taught how much weight, if any, to put on your new joint. With practice, you'll soon be able to walk with just the aid of a walker. You can then transition to crutches as needed.

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