

## NEED TO KNOW FOR PATIENTS & FAMILIES

what  
patients  
and their  
families  
need to  
know

# Care after Hip Fracture Surgery

**Getting Comfortable: Why Is It Important?** You will need to have good pain control after surgery so you can move around and get your sleep. Moving and sleeping both help you heal faster. Moving in bed, taking deep breaths and walking helps prevent complications. It is normal to have some soreness for the first few months. The soreness is worse in the first few days and then gets better over time. If pain or soreness keeps you from moving or sleeping, speak with your healthcare team.

### You Play a Key Role - What You Can Do:

1. Know what your pain medicines are and how often you should take them.
2. Take your pain medicine as prescribed. Tell your nurse or doctor if you have worries or concerns about pain medicine.
3. Let your nurse or doctor know if the pain medicine is not working. Changes may be made so that it will work better for you.
4. Take pain medicine before the pain gets bad. Pain medicine works better that way.
5. Move around frequently as recommended. You may have some pain when you first move but this will get better more quickly if you stay active.
6. Balance activity with rest periods. Don't let yourself get over tired.
7. If you are having trouble sleeping or moving due to pain, take your pain medicine one hour before bedtime, or before activity.
8. Ice may help with soreness. Place an ice pack wrapped in a towel on your sore hip for up to 20 minutes at a time. Wait at least an hour before placing the ice pack on again. Too much ice time can slow healing.
9. Distract yourself with visitors, watching movies or doing quiet hobbies.
10. Take long, slow, deep breaths in and out to relax your muscles.
11. Think positively. You will get better day-by-day!

**If your pain becomes suddenly worse let your nurse/doctor know right away.**

A collaborative project of NICHE (Nurses Improving Care for Healthsystem Elders) and ICON (International Collaboration of Orthopaedic Nursing). ICON is comprised of national orthopaedic nursing associations from seven countries across four continents whose mission is to advance the highest standards of musculoskeletal nursing care.

## Preventing Problems after Hip Fracture Surgery

**Why Is It Important?** After a broken hip there are some problems that may occur. These include constipation, delirium, infection, blood clots and future fractures. You can help prevent these from happening.

### What You Can Do:

Be aware of the signs of problems and how you can prevent them.

**1. CONSTIPATION What are the signs?** Going for three days without a bowel movement. Straining to have a bowel movement. Having hard, small bowel movements. Stomach pain or discomfort, nausea, vomiting, or decreased appetite.

**How can I prevent it?** Be active, move around. Drink plenty of fluids. Eat a high fiber diet: bran, prunes, whole grains, fruits, and vegetables. Take laxatives if needed. Ask your nurse, doctor or pharmacist about best choices.

**2. DELIRIUM What are the signs?** New confusion. More trouble than usual concentrating or thinking. Feeling unusually drowsy or restless.

**How can I prevent it?** Get enough sleep each night. Wear your glasses and/or hearing aids. If you have pain, take medicine as prescribed. Limit alcohol intake.

**3. INFECTION What are the signs?** A fever and/or a delirium may signal an infection.

- WOUND - Redness, swelling, or pain at incision site. Odor or pus at the incision site.
- BLADDER - Frequent urination, burning pain or discomfort when passing urine.
- CHEST - Coughing and green or yellow phlegm

**How can I prevent it?** Wash your hands often and ask others to do the same. Eat a healthy diet, no smoking.

- WOUND - Keep your incision clean and do not get the area wet until completely healed. If you have a dressing on your incision, follow the doctor's instructions regarding care.
- BLADDER - Drink six-eight glasses of water each day. Go to the bathroom often, don't wait.
- CHEST - Breathe deeply and cough if congested.

**4. BLOOD CLOTS What are the signs?** Red, tender, or painful calf/lower leg. Swollen or shiny calf/lower leg.

**How can I prevent it?** Move frequently, walk and do your exercises. Take your blood thinning medication as prescribed. If you are at home and signs of a blood clot seek IMMEDIATE medical attention.

**5. PREVENTING FUTURE FRACTURES.** Having had one fracture increases your risk for another fracture. Ask your doctor about how to prevent future fractures.

**What should I do if I think I have any of these complications?  
Contact your doctor or nurse.**

**IF YOU HAVE SHORTNESS OF BREATH OR CHEST PAIN AT HOME,  
CALL AN AMBULANCE.**

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**Why NICHE?** NICHE Hospitals are committed to making the hospital stay as safe and positive as possible for older adults.