

TEACHING PLAN FOR: Total Joint Replacement: Post-Operative Care

**PURPOSE:** To outline the nursing responsibilities for education of patients/significant others who have undergone total lower extremity joint replacement.

**DESIRED  
PATIENT OUTCOMES:**

1. Patient and significant other will verbalize understanding of/demonstrate exercise regimen per Physical Therapy Protocol.
2. Patient and significant other will verbalize understanding of changes in ADL's.
3. Patient will demonstrate safe and appropriate use of assistive devices.

**CLINICAL  
ASSESSMENT  
AND CARE:**

1. Assess patient's and/or significant other's ability to learn necessary content needed for post-operative management, e.g. ability to attend during education sessions, to follow verbal instructions and to read/comprehend written material.
2. Assess patient's ability to return demonstrate exercise regimen.
3. Content should be presented as often as possible during hospitalization. Patient and/or significant other will need repeated opportunities to review information and to demonstrate understanding prior to discharge.
  - a. If possible, review related post-operative care with patient prior to surgery, specifically:
    1. Hemovac drains
    2. Abductor pillow (THR)
    3. CPM machine (TKR)
    4. Mobility restrictions
    5. Use of trapeze
    6. Proper positioning of lower extremities
    7. Hip precautions
  - b. Review/discuss physical therapy protocol with regard to:
    1. Lower extremity exercises: quad sets, gluteal sets, ankle pumps
    2. Progressive advancement of physical activity: dangling, transfer from bed to chair/commode, ambulation with assistive devices and correct sitting position.

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- c. Review wound care:
    1. Signs and symptoms of wound infection
    2. Care of incision line
  - d. Review/reinforce teaching for anticoagulation therapy regimen:
    1. Dose
    2. Side effects of medication
    3. Lab work for PT/PTT
  - e. Review adjustments in ADL's to prepare for discharge:
    1. Use of proper footwear
    2. Assessment of home environment (e.g. stairs)
    3. Assistive devices, e.g. walker, crutches, cane and/or raised toilet seat
4. Consult with House Officer if:
- Patient exhibits difficulty learning content related to post-operative management.
  - Patient exhibits difficulty performing exercise regimen and/or progressing appropriately in physical activity.

**DOCUMENTATION:**

1. Document patient learning needs on appropriate PFTR.
2. Document patient response to teaching on PFTR and/or in progress notes per Unit/Department Documentation Standards.

**APPROVAL:** Medical-Surgical Standards Committee  
Nursing Standards Committee

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** 3/88

**REVISION DATES:** 12/90, 11/94, 5/03, 9/03, 11/03, 6/06