

# Preparing for hip or knee replacement surgery

Information and advice for patients

## *Orthopaedics*

You have been placed on the waiting list for joint replacement surgery. To prepare for your surgery you will need to attend the hospital on 2 occasions and will need to follow the advice below to make sure you are as fit as possible for your surgery.

### **Appointments**

Before your operation you will be sent 2 appointments to attend:

#### **1. The Hip & Knee Club**

You **MUST** attend this appointment as you will not be able to have your operation if you haven't attended.

#### **What is the Hip & Knee Club?**

The Hip & Knee Club is an educational session where you will be given:

- Information about your operation and anaesthetic
- An opportunity to look at the implants
- Information on pain management
- Exercises to strengthen your muscles
- Advice on what we expect from you and you can expect from us
- Advice on discharge planning
- A DVD for you to watch at home
- Contact numbers to answer future questions

If you are a hip patient you will also be measured for any equipment you may need after you operation during this session.

The Hip & Knee Club is a group session, lasting 1-2 hours that will give you the opportunity to discuss any issues or concerns, not only with the speakers but also with other patients and relatives who are possibly feeling the same as you.

#### **2. Pre-operative assessment**

The pre-operative assessment is an appointment to check that you are as fit as possible for the anaesthetic and operation. At the assessment you will be asked questions about your medical history and general health and wellbeing. You will also be examined, have routine blood tests taken and may have an electrocardiogram (ECG); this takes a recording of the electrical activity of your heart. You will also have a screening test for MRSA – please see the 'MRSA Screening, elective patients' leaflet for more information.

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### **Taking care of your health**

It is important that you are in the best health possible before your operation, so that it can go ahead as planned. Things that may delay your operation include:

- Poorly controlled high blood pressure
- Poorly controlled blood sugars
- Anaemia
- Skin conditions with cracked skin and infection
- Severe athlete's foot

If you have any of these problems you should see your GP as soon as possible. We also recommend that you have a dental check-up in the next few weeks to check for any dental infections.

You need to be clear of any infections before your operation because infection anywhere in your body can be carried in the blood to your joints. When a joint replacement becomes infected it is a big problem that requires several weeks of antibiotics, usually in hospital. It may result in further surgery to remove the infected joint. If you suffer from any infection within 2 weeks of your operation date you must contact the hospital. It is safer for you to delay surgery.

### **Travel plans**

You should avoid long journeys (1 hour or more) for 3 weeks before and after joint replacement surgery because this can increase your risk of developing a blood clot, which can become serious.

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### Further information

If you have any questions concerns you will have the opportunity to speak to us about these at the Hip & Knee Club. It may be useful for you to write a list of anything you would like to ask us about and bring this with you to the session.

For more information about our hospitals and services please see our website [www.swbh.nhs.uk](http://www.swbh.nhs.uk) or follow us on Twitter @SWBHnhs and Facebook [www.facebook.com/SWBHnhs](http://www.facebook.com/SWBHnhs).

### Sources used for the information in this leaflet

- British Orthopaedic Association, 'Primary total hip replacement: A guide to good practice', August 2006
- British Orthopaedic Association and British Association for Surgery of the Knee, 'Knee replacement: A guide to good practice', published online Dec 2011

If you would like to suggest any amendments or improvements to this leaflet please contact the communications department on 0121 507 5420 or email: [swb-tr.swbh-gm-patient-information@nhs.net](mailto:swb-tr.swbh-gm-patient-information@nhs.net)



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