

The Ultimate Joint Replacement Pre-Op Checklist

Use this guide to ensure your home is safe, your mind is prepared, and your recovery starts off right.

4 Weeks Before Surgery: Health & Logistics

- **Confirm Your "Coach":** Designate a reliable friend or family member to drive you home and stay with you for at least 48-72 hours.
- **Stop Smoking/Tobacco:** Start now. This is the single best thing you can do to reduce infection risk and speed up healing.
- **Pre-Hab:** Start the gentle strengthening exercises your surgeon or therapist recommended. Stronger muscles going in mean a stronger body coming out.
- **Review Medications:** Talk to your primary doctor and your [joint replacement surgeon near me](#) about *all* medications, vitamins, and supplements you take. You will get a specific list of what to stop (like blood thinners, aspirin, and some supplements) and when.
- **Complete All Medical Clearances:** Schedule and complete your physical, blood work, EKG, and any other required tests.
- **Schedule Dental Work:** If you need a cleaning or any dental procedure, do it now. You must avoid all dental work for at least 3 months after surgery to prevent infection.

2 Weeks Before Surgery: Prepare Your Home

- **Clear the Decks:** Remove all throw rugs, electrical cords, and clutter from walkways. Your walker needs a clear path.
- **Prepare Your "Recovery Station":** Set up a comfortable chair (firm, with armrests) or recliner. Have a table next to it with essentials:
 - Phone and charger (with a long cord)
 - TV remote
 - Water bottle
 - Medication log
 - Tissues
 - Notebook and pen
- **Bathroom Safety:**
 - Install a raised toilet seat.
 - Install a shower chair or bench.
 - Get a long-handled shower sponge and a detachable shower head.
 - Place non-slip mats *inside* the tub/shower.
- **Stock Your Kitchen:**
 - Prepare and freeze simple, single-serving meals (soup, stew, pasta).

- Stock up on easy-to-make items (yogurt, fruit, protein shakes, instant oatmeal).
- **Place Essentials at Arm-Level:** Move frequently used items in your kitchen and bedroom to counters or shelves that are between your waist and shoulder height. Avoid reaching up high or bending down low.

The Week of Surgery: Final Details

- **Confirm Surgery Time:** Call the hospital or surgeon's office to confirm your arrival time.
- **Pack Your Hospital Bag:**
 - Comfortable, loose-fitting clothes to go home in (e.g., elastic-waist pants, baggy shorts).
 - Slip-on shoes with a closed back and good grip.
 - Your walker (labeled with your name).
 - Personal toiletries (toothbrush, toothpaste, brush).
 - A list of all your current medications.
 - Your ID, insurance card, and any hospital paperwork.
 - *Do NOT bring jewelry, large amounts of cash, or valuables.*
- **Final Prep:**
 - Pick up your post-op prescriptions (pain medication, stool softener).
 - Do laundry and change your bed linens.
 - Pay any outstanding bills.
- **Night Before Surgery:**
 - Shower/scrub with the special antiseptic soap (like Hibiclens) if your surgeon provided it.
 - **Do NOT eat or drink anything after midnight** (or as instructed by your surgeon). This is critical.

Questions to Ask Your Surgeon

- What are my specific "precautions" after surgery (e.g., movements to avoid)?
- What kind of implant are you using and why?
- What pain management plan will I be on?
- What signs of infection or blood clots should I watch for?
- When can I expect to drive, return to work, and resume activities like swimming or golf?