



Ambulatory hip and knee surgery

This leaflet answers common questions about having ambulatory hip and knee replacement surgery.

What is ambulatory care?

Ambulatory care is provided on an outpatient basis, including diagnosis, observation, consultation, treatment, intervention, and rehabilitation services. This minimises the amount of time that you need to stay in the hospital following your operation with the aim of getting you home either the same day as the operation or the following day. The benefits of this for patients include a lower risk of infection and blood clots, a quicker return to normal activities and a more comfortable recovery at home.

How does ambulatory joint surgery differ from inpatient joint surgery?

There are a few differences between outpatient ambulatory surgery and inpatient surgery. These should be discussed with your surgeon and are outlined below:

- We encourage all patients to attend a pre-operative joint school and this is an absolute requirement for ambulatory patients.
- You will receive an anaesthetic that will allow rapid recovery after the operation.
- When you return to the ward, you will be encouraged to change into your own clothes and sit out in a chair as much as possible, in order to prepare you for the rehabilitation phase of your treatment.
- The physiotherapy team will see you as soon as possible after your operation for early mobilisation.
- You will be reviewed by a doctor or nurse before you leave hospital, to ensure you meet our safe criteria for discharge – your pain should be well controlled, you should be walking around with mobility aids and you are eating and drinking.
- We will send you home with a good supply of painkillers. Please make arrangements to enable to you to return home on the same day as your operation or the following day.
- After you go home it is important to know you are not alone! One of our orthopaedic nurses will telephone you the day after the surgery to check in on your progress and ask you some standard questions. It is very unlikely you will get a problem at home, but if you are worried about anything such as pain not being under control, or a complication, then there are two things you can do:
 - Medical emergencies: You should call an ambulance if appropriate and urgently attend the emergency department (A&E)
 - All other concerns: Please call Redlands Ward via the hospital switchboard (0118 322 5111) to speak to the nurse in charge to discuss the issue. If needed, a plan will made for a doctor to review you on the same day

- The important thing is that you do not sit at home in severe pain or with a problem. Some patients may be nervous about contacting the hospital when they have a problem but please get in touch with us if you have any concerns so that we can help.

How will I be followed up?

Follow-up appointments after your operation will depend on your individual case, with physiotherapy appointments and/or appointments with the surgical team. This will be explained to you before you leave hospital.

You will also receive a phone call the day after the operation to see how you are progressing.

Contacting us

Clinical Admin Team (CAT 5) Orthopaedics: 0118 322 7415 email: rbbh.CAT5@nhs.net

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

RBFT Orthopaedic Department, June 2026

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