

Hip and Knee Action Plan

PATIENTS TO BENEFIT FROM NEW & EXPANDED ASSESSMENT CLINICS



SUPPORT FROM THE START

Nova Scotia Health Authority has a multi-year plan underway to improve access, promote wellness and improve the quality of care provided to patients with hip or knee joint arthritis.

The first part of our plan has created and expanded Orthopedic Assessment Clinics (OACs) to make these valuable services available to patients at each of our five joint replacement sites.

Some OACs existed in the past, but the support each offered was different and had been limited in some areas. Our plan is making similar resources and supports available to support all patients along their journey to wellness. Dozens of new providers have been hired and clinic space has been set up to allow new and enhanced clinics to begin operating. Others will become fully-operational later this year.

OACs will be a patient's first point of contact when their primary care provider feels they may need a hip or knee replacement. Rather than being referred to a surgeon and perhaps waiting several months or more for their first appointment, all referrals are now being managed through OACs.

These clinics work with patients to determine what they need and connect them with the services that are right for them.

OACs will also help us better manage wait lists and give patients more choice. Patients in need of surgery will be able to be referred to the facility or surgeon with the shortest wait, if they wish.

CONNECTING PATIENTS TO CARE & RESOURCES

OACs coordinate the care that patients receive and support them on their path to wellness. Each involves a team of care providers that may include nurses, surgeons, social workers, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, dietitians and others.

After being referred, patients are booked for an appointment with the OAC where the team goes over their file, checks their mobility, weight and blood pressure, reviews test results and more. They also talk to patients to understand how their hip or knee problem affects them, to learn about their goals (e.g. join their friends for walks again) and to hear what they prefer (e.g. willing to travel in Nova Scotia if it means having surgery sooner).

This visit helps determine if a patient is a good candidate for surgery now, if their condition may mean they will need surgery down the road, or if there are things they need help with in order to be ready for surgery (e.g. lose weight, stop smoking).

After this assessment the patient may go on to see a surgeon, but the role of the OAC does not stop there. They will also offer education, advice and support to patients, including:

- access to services to help them better manage their pain
- access to wellness programs (e.g. healthy eating and group exercise /pre-habilitation classes)
- physiotherapy to increase their mobility and strength
- advice to make their home safer and more accessible to support their mobility (e.g. raised toilet seats, handrails)
- information, education and motivation to help them prepare for their surgery and recovery

Hip and Knee Action Plan

PATIENTS BENEFIT FROM GREATER FOCUS ON WELLNESS

CHANGING HOW WE CARE FOR HIP & KNEE PATIENTS

Our plan is not simply about doing more surgeries to reduce wait times and lists. We are making wellness a bigger focus in the care we offer before, during and after surgery. We are changing how we look at joint replacements.

If patients with hip or knee issues are not necessarily sick, why treat them like they are?

How can we help patients get the most from their surgery, or possibly delay or avoid the need for surgery altogether?

In the fall of 2018 our joint replacement sites introduced a wellness model proven to help patients in other areas. All patients will be able to rely on the same quality of care and new approaches aimed at helping them live their best, most active lives possible.

Patients are better informed and prepared for their surgery.

We work with patients to understand what is important to them, their preferences and their goals.

We support patients to get up and moving about soon after their surgery, and in the days that follow.

Patients have a plan and supports to return home as soon as possible after surgery.

Reducing the time patients stay in hospital allows them to return to their routines. This encourages patients to move, which can aide recovery and help prevent complications.

Faster recoveries could also free-up hospital beds to allow even more Nova Scotians to have the surgery they need sooner.



WHAT DOES THIS WELLNESS APPROACH LOOK LIKE?

Getting ready for surgery

- We suggest patients have a coach. This friend or family member will join them for appointments and classes, to offer support and encouragement.
- Patients are able to receive education and support, including:
 - a group exercise and education program to increase their strength, mobility and knowledge.
 - help to achieve a healthier weight/stop smoking.
 - advice on how to make their home safe and accessible (e.g. shower grab bars) ahead of their surgery and for their return home.

Recovery after surgery

- Patients recover in special chairs that allow them to get up and move easier than a normal hospital bed.
- Most patients take their first steps the day of their surgery and will join a group activity class the next day.
- Patients wear their own comfortable, loose fitting clothes. Small changes like this can motivate patients and help them keep moving and not feel "sick".
- Patients get daily newsletters to encourage activity and offer tips. They can also track and celebrate their progress on a poster on their hospital inpatient unit.
- Some otherwise healthy patients may go home the day of their surgery, with the right supports and follow-up. Others may recover more quickly and go home the next day. Patients with health issues, such as diabetes, and those needing extra support at home, may stay longer.
- A health care provider follows-up with patients over the phone after their return home.