



**MAUI  
ORTHOPEDIC  
INSTITUTE**

## ROAD TO RECOVERY

*Frequently Asked Questions After Your Total Joint Surgery*

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# INTRODUCTION

Congratulations!

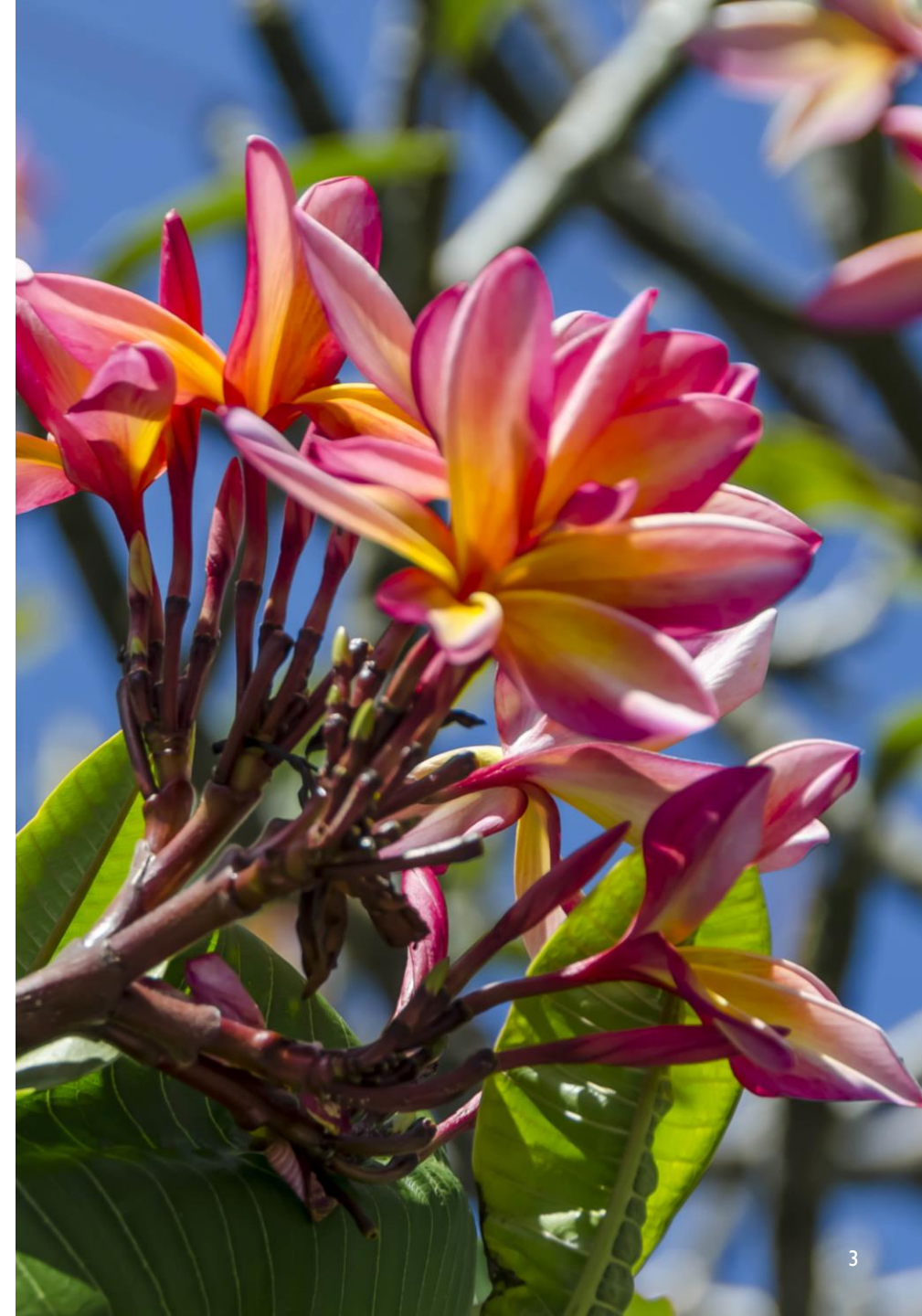
You are well on your way to recovering from your total joint replacement surgery.

This booklet is meant to help you recover at home and review commonly asked questions.

Thank you for choosing Dr. Zachary Thielen as your orthopedic surgeon and partner in health.

Sincerely,

The Maui Orthopedic Institute Team



# BRUISING AND SWELLING

The lower part of the leg on the side of surgery may be significantly swollen and bruised due to fluid build-up in the thigh and calf. This usually occurs a few days after surgery and can last for several weeks.

Make sure to elevate your leg while sitting or lying down. You can place a pillow under the ankle, but do not place it directly under the knee.

Use an insulated iced pack on the sides of the incision every 2 to 4 hours for 20 to 30 minutes at a time.

Do not place ice directly on the incision.

# WOUND CARE

Always wash your hands *before* and *after* touching the wound area.

If you have gauze dressing at the site, remove it and apply a new dressing every day until the wound is dry.

If you have Aquacel® or Band-Aid® dressing, leave it in place for one week after your surgery and then remove.

Once the incision is completely dry, it is okay to leave it uncovered.

At this point the wound should remain uncovered. It is to be covered only if you are going to a place where it may get dirty.

If you have staples in place, they will be removed in the office 2 weeks after your surgery.

Do not apply any ointments or creams on the incision for at least 6 weeks after the surgery.





## SHOWERING

Dr. Thielen will let you know when you can shower.

Do not scrub the incision.

Do not spray water directly on the incision.

To dry, dab the incision with a clean and dry towel.

Do not soak in a bathtub or hot tub for 6 to 8 weeks OR until Dr. Thielen says it is okay.

# MANAGING PAIN

Recovering from this surgery can be painful and the level of pain is different for each person, however it should improve over time.

The goal is to keep your pain manageable.

Moving during the early recovery period will help to lessen pain.

It is important to do your breathing exercises hourly to increase oxygen supply to your body as this helps with healing.

Reposition your body and joint frequently to help relieve pain.

If you are in pain, take medications as prescribed, apply ice as directed, elevate your leg, and try relaxation techniques.

Swelling can cause pain.

- Place ice packs on the sides of the incision every 2 to 4 hours for 20 to 30 minutes at a time.
- Do not place ice directly on the incision.

**Do not** wait to take medications until pain becomes unbearable.



# PAIN MEDICATION

The pain medication you are given may be a narcotic; these are very strong pain medications.

Narcotics may cause side effects such as:

- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Constipation
- Dizziness
- Drowsiness

These medications can be most helpful if taken:

- Before going to bed
- About 20 minutes before physical therapy of activity

You may be given other pain-reducing medications such as over-the-counter Tylenol® or Ibuprofen.

For medication refills, call our office at (808) 649-1487. See "Contact Info" page for a list of numbers.





# NERVE BLOCK PUMP

You may go home with a continuous nerve block catheter and pump. This pump delivers numbing medication to help manage pain after surgery.

- Check to ensure the clamp is open and the tubing line is not kinked.
- The pump volume will not appear to change size for up to 36 hours.
- Do NOT change the rate on the dial unless instructed by Dr. Thielen. This is for your safety.
- Some leaking under the clear tape is normal. If leaking, cover with gauze or a small towel.
- Dr. Thielen will tell you if you can shower with the pump.
  - When showering, make sure to place the pump and black bag away from the direct line of water.
  - Do not scrub near the clear tape.
- After 3 days, the pump should be flat/deflated.
- Remove the catheter from under the skin and place all items in the trash.
- If the catheter accidentally pulls out in the first 3 days after surgery, place ALL items in the trash. Take pain medication as prescribed.



## SIDE EFFECTS

Surgery, anesthesia, pain medication, and inactivity can lead to urinary issues and constipation.

Eat a healthy, high-fiber diet.

Drink 6 to 8 glasses of water a day unless you are on a fluid restriction.

For constipation, take a stool softener on a regular basis if using pain medication.

Contact the office if you have:

- Urinary frequency issues
- No bowel movement for 4 days

# DRIVING

Dr. Thielen will inform you when you can start driving.

General recommendations are:

- Do not drive at any time if you are taking narcotic pain medication.
- For left-sided surgery: No driving for about 2 to 3 weeks after surgery.
- For right-sided surgery: No driving until 3 to 6 weeks after surgery.

You may discuss this further with Dr. Thielen at your follow-up appointment.



# OTHER ACTIVITIES

Stay active!

Increase your activity  
gradually and rest when you  
need to.

Monitor yourself for pain  
and swelling.

Remember: no swimming in  
pool, ocean or hot tub for 6  
to 8 weeks after surgery.

# WHEN TO CALL

If you believe you are experiencing a life-threatening emergency such as chest pain or shortness of breath, call **911** or to go the nearest emergency room.

Call Maui Orthopedic Institute office if you experience:

- Severe knee or hip pain even though you are taking pain medication.
- Pain, tenderness, and redness in your calf.
- Opening of your incision.
- Excessive bleeding or drainage from your incision (soaking through gauze).
- Temperature over 101 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Any other concerns.

Call the office if you have any other questions or concerns.





# IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

## **Maui Orthopedic Institute**

Monday through Friday

9am to 4:30pm

(808) 649-1487

## **After-hours Advice**

**Call the office number above and leave a message. Dr. Thielen can retrieve these after hours messages**

**The Emergency Room is available as a last resort if concerned about a life or limb threatening condition.**

**In general, if you feel the issue can be addressed during regular business hours it is best to contact the clinic directly for post op care and questions.**