

# Care Partner Education

## *Helpful Tips*

### Notify the Surgeon if the Patient Develops:

- Fever of 101.5 or higher
- Severe pain associated with twisting, turning or injury that doesn't decrease with rest
- Continued drainage, swelling, or bruising from the operative site
- Continued change in color and/or coolness of the operated leg/foot
- **In the event of chest pain or shortness of breath CALL 911**

### Helping the Patient Move Around

#### Walking:

- Use two crutches or walker for EVERY step.
- Gradually increase walking daily. Start by walking 5-10 minutes 3 or 4 times a day.
- Avoid hills, steep ramps, and uneven surfaces until evaluated by a home physical therapist.
- The goal by 6 weeks is to be walking each day 20-30 minutes 1 or 2 times a day.
- Maintain weight bearing as tolerated on the operated leg. They may progress to a single crutch, cane, or no device as tolerated and advised by the physical therapist and/or surgeon.

#### Going Up and Down Stairs

- Crutches follow the patient up and lead them down. Be sure crutches are under their arms and firmly placed on stairs.
  - **UPSTAIRS:** Un-operated leg, followed by operated leg, then crutches.
  - **DOWNSTAIRS:** Crutches, followed by operated leg, then un-operated leg.

#### Getting into a Car

- The patient should sit in the front passenger seat with the seat pushed back as far as possible.
  - When getting in the car, the patient should sit down, face the curb and then maneuver in position facing the dashboard. Hands assist legs.

### Care Partner: Don't be Afraid to Ask for Help

Sometimes care partners make a commitment to care for another and then realize it is more than they can handle. Don't be shy. Ask a friend or family member to assist you. Maybe they can help with cooking, laundry or walking the dog while you are taking care of the patient.

### Questions?

- For all clinical questions, please contact the patient's surgeon's office.