



LOPEZ ISLAND
HOSPICE
& HOME
SUPPORT

INFORMATION & RESOURCES

Summer 2019

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Lopez Island
Hospice & Home Support
is a 501(c)(3) non-profit
volunteer organization.
All services are free.

Ways to Support Lopez Island Hospice & Home Support

- Donate on our website via Paypal
- Make your Amazon purchases at smile.amazon.com. .5% of the purchase price goes to LIHHS.
- Write us a check – we've included an envelope for your convenience.
- Credit card.

Many thanks for your continued generosity.

The Emotional Effects of Joint Replacement

By Elizabeth Landrum, Ph.D.

Osteoarthritis can affect every joint of the body, with hips and knees being particularly vulnerable. After more conservative treatments have been exhausted, total joint arthroplasty (TJA) is a cost-effective, highly successful treatment option. With more than a million TJAs performed in this country annually, these operations can sound like “no big deal.” Of course, any surgery on one’s own body is a big deal; no one signs up for it lightly. However, the promise of relief from continual pain and immobility can supersede the anxiety and stress commonly felt before any operation.

We have all witnessed the smiles and celebrations that often follow a new knee or hip, so it’s easy to assume that anyone will be happier after a replacement, but this is not always the case. In fact, depression following a TJA procedure is actually quite common. Even after the ups and downs that come with pain and impaired mobility, nothing seems to prepare one for feeling depressed during recovery.

Since the subject of post-op depression is seldom discussed between patient and surgeon, experiencing depression is usually surprising and confusing for the recovering patient. It can be as scary as it is bewildering, and tends to be something one doesn’t want to reveal, sometimes leading to increased isolation and loneliness. After all, a joint replacement is often looked at as a “new lease on life;” sadness, loss of interest, and mood swings don’t seem to fit into the equation.

A wave of depression can hit in the hospital, after a few days at home, or even weeks after surgery. Everyone is different, and the degree to which patients experience a bout of depression, the length of time they feel depressed, and how they overcome it, all depend on the individual.

Depression colors everything. It affects behavior, energy, outlook, and it can interfere with desires to be social, to participate fully in recovery, and even to resume pleasurable activities. It’s not surprising that several studies have linked depression with functional outcome after TJA, demonstrating the relationship between the degree of depression and the speed and completeness of recovery. There is a growing body of evidence that psychological factors such as personality, anxiety, and/or depression and negative thinking styles influence both patient satisfaction and recovery time. Also, people with moderate anxiety or depression have more complications after their replacements, and those with a major depressive disorder consume more opioids immediately after TJAs.

The various factors contributing to post-op depression include reactions to anesthesia, a “surgical let-down period” (when the anticipation

and adrenaline are over and life hasn’t yet improved), “cabin fever,” and feeling dependent. Being unable to do simple and usual tasks for oneself is difficult for most people, especially for those who see themselves as independent and self-sufficient. It can be hard to ask for help and easy to feel like a burden or a drag on others. When there are changes in one’s self-image, this pattern is further compounded.

It’s important to know clearly what to expect, as expectations and beliefs are known to affect recovery. Frustration and disappointment in the seemingly long recovery process are expected, yet difficult. Focusing on how far one has progressed, not just on how far one has to go, can help. While prescribed exercises are always involved in recovery, the motivation is not always there. Still, exercise is one of the best things one can do to improve mood and relieve stress, as well as to propel recovery forward.

Much of the body’s energy resources go into physical healing after any trauma, including surgery, and there may be less available for other things. This can be complicated by poor quality sleep (normal after surgery), sometimes leading to vicious cycles of lowered energy, depression, worry, more sleeplessness, etc. As healing continues during sleep, the quality and quantity of sleep patterns during recovery should always be addressed. There are many practical suggestions available (through literature, the internet, physicians, therapists) for getting a good night’s sleep. Naturally, healthy nutrition will also promote mental and physical well-being.

Pain itself affects both mind and body. It’s hard to be positive when you’re hurting, and stress or depression may exacerbate pain. Unfortunately, depression is also a potential side effect of narcotic painkillers. Healthy short-term pain management is crucial and may involve a variety of techniques, such as imagery or meditation, as well as medication. Acceptance that the situation (with its discomforts, frustrations, and necessary dependency) is temporary often helps people “push through.”

While social isolation may be unhealthy, reaching out to family and friends usually reaps benefits. Supporters may need to understand the natural ups and downs of TJA recovery, and how and when to suggest further assistance. Daily self-monitoring can reveal what’s happening in the individual’s unique interplay of medications, activities, exercise, sleep, mood, etc. When needed or desired, there are several proven professional therapies available. A temporary state of anxiety or depression may not be unusual, yet it’s important that it not become a more chronic condition, affecting one’s ongoing quality of life — a life that can be greatly enhanced by enjoying a new joint.

If you are planning joint replacement, please contact Lopez Island Hospice & Home Support at 360-468-4446 for help during your recovery.

My Joint Replacment Experience

by Levanne Hendrix, GNP, PhD

For years, I had lived with chronic pain, which I thought was resulting from back issues. Last year, the pain and functional deterioration increased dramatically despite all the usual non-invasive treatments and therapies. While continuing with physical therapy, I immediately made arrangements and plans for hip replacement surgery.

Never having undergone any major surgery, I became well informed by Total Joint Arthroplasty (TJA) education classes and talking with friends. I also called Lopez Island Hospice and Home Support (LIHHS) and Lopez Senior Services to arrange support services, medical equipment, transportation needs, and meals. My surgery was scheduled for January of this year, meaning that I was not only recovering at home, but I also was snowed in. Despite the snow, I felt totally supported by the Lopez community, friends, neighbors, and LIHHS. Verbal encouragement was very helpful, as was the shared experience of a friend's successful recovery process. During my recovery I found it most frustrating to have to plan every step to maintain stability, and my balance was non-existent. But at eight weeks post-op, I was able to give up the cane and walker and could drive my car again, enjoying the freedom of movement.

Despite my very positive outcome, I realize that I did have mood swings and depressive thoughts, but chalked it up to various medications and being snowed in. It is helpful to know that depression is common during recovery. I can't stress enough the contribution my support people made in my own recovery. I am eternally grateful for that and for becoming a new and improved model!

Advice from a Physical Therapist

By Nancy Ewert, LIHHS board member, & Terri Drahn, Lopez Island Physical Therapy

When thinking about joint replacement, which seems needed among my peers these days, I decided to ask our Lopez Island Physical Therapist Terri Drahn for her advice.

She stated that after reading Elizabeth Landrum's thorough and honest article, there was not that much to add. After some thought, however, she did come up with a few valuable tidbits.

- Come into surgery as strong as you can. Stationary bike, pool exercises (go FLIP) and prescribed physical therapy strengthening exercises are great to do for at least six weeks before surgery. Those who go into surgery stronger tend to have an easier time and better outcomes.
- Every knee and hip is different. Try not to compare with your neighbor who has had a knee or hip replaced.
- Remember that the body registers the surgery as "trauma." It has been through an ordeal and needs time to heal.
- Your knee and hip want to move. Even if exercises feel like the last thing you want to do—DO THE EXERCISES. Often you feel better after doing them.
- Sign up and get on the physical therapy schedule BEFORE surgery.

Lopez Island Physical Therapy has moved from the clinic, and is now located on Eades Lane in the old nursery. For more information or to make an appointment, call 360-468-4382.

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LOCAL POSTAL PATRON

Summer 2019

More than Twenty Years of Service to the Community

Volunteer Training Starts October 5th

Lopez Island Hospice & Home Support is currently accepting applications from people interested in serving as direct care volunteers.

You will receive valuable training in: communication and listening skills, ethical and legal issues, family systems, dementia, depression, stress management, end of life care, and grief and loss. Applicants are asked to complete a volunteer application form, participate in a preliminary interview, and attend all sessions (20 hours). Our training sessions start October 5, and are offered free of charge. Please call 360-468-4446 or email admin@lihhs.org for more information.

THE ELEVENTH ANNUAL JINGLE BELL DINNER

Scheduled for November 30 at the Community Center, the Jingle Bell Dinner is your chance to spend a festive evening with your friends and neighbors, all for a good cause. Tickets are \$75 each, and will be available through the Hospice & Home Support office. Call 360-468-4446 or email admin@lihhs.org for more information.

New LIHHS Trustees

Jonathan Dahl has been a Medical Social Worker at Hospice of the Northwest for the last six years. **Nora McCloy** worked in the Quality Division of Group Cooperative for 16 years. Please join us in welcoming them to the board.