

Sunnybrook is improving access to education support services by bringing them a little closer to home for many patients undergoing hip or knee replacement surgery.

In 2004, Sunnybrook's Holland Orthopaedic & Arthritic Centre launched a pre-operative education program (Pr.E.P. class) to provide patients with the information they need to prepare for their hip or knee replacement surgery.

Recently, Sunnybrook has teamed up with Shoppers Home Health Care to provide these Pr.E.P. classes in the community close to home for the many patients who live outside the Greater Toronto Area.

"The joint replacement literature has clearly shown that patients who are better prepared for surgery have less anxiety, are more satisfied with their experience and recover faster than patients who do not receive education before surgery," reports Cecilia Nguyen, occupational therapist at the Holland Centre. "Expanding the classes from the hospital into the community will enable more patients to access information that will help them maintain peace of mind, fitness and safety before and after surgery."

In the initial phase of the service expansion, classes will be offered at one Shoppers Home Health Care location in the Durham Region. Phase two may see expansion into other areas where there is an identified need.

The first off-site class is being held on Tuesday, August 26, at the Westney Heights Plaza Shoppers Home Health Care store in Ajax. Classes will continue to be held monthly at this location and classes at the Holland Centre will continue as scheduled.

Pr.E.P. classes are led by an occupational therapist and a physical therapist. Topics covered include:

- How to best maintain or improve strength and fitness before your surgery
- Exercises and activities to do immediately following surgery
- How to plan for discharge from hospital
- Necessary or helpful equipment
- Safety
- Transfers and mobility
- How to manage your every day activities

"Before I took the class I felt very anxious about going into surgery and I didn't know how I was going to manage the recovery process," recalls Jean Smith, a Sunnybrook patient who recently had a total knee replacement at the Holland Centre. "The instructors put my mind at ease and taught me what I needed to have in place to make life easier after the surgery. Having all of my questions answered gave me confidence that I could cope with the surgery and recovery."

For information on Pr.E.P. classes held at either location, call 416.967.8650 voicemail # 5833 and leave a message with contact information.