

Knee Repair: Discharge Care Instructions

Recovering at Home

This care sheet gives you a general idea about how to care for your knee at home. These recommendations are designed to help your recovery process, but each person may recover at a different pace. Follow the steps below to get better as quickly as possible.

Wound care

- **Keep your surgical dressing and ACE wrap on until your first post-operative visit.** If your dressing is saturated, you may reinforce it with additional bandages. If this is not working, call your doctor's office.
- **Keep the incisions clean and dry. Do not soak the knee in water or go swimming** until cleared by your doctor. You may shower on post-operative Day 2 with your bandages covered (see Activities of Daily Living below).

Pain Management

- Medications
 - We suggest you use the pain medication the first night prior to going to bed. This in order to ease any pain when the nerve block wears off.
 - You should eat something when you take pain medication to avoid an upset stomach. Only take narcotics as prescribed as needed. Plan to gradually reduce your narcotic use over the coming weeks.
 - Your doctor may prescribe or recommend non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medication (Aleve, Motrin, etc...). Use these as directed.
 - Pain medication may make you constipated. Please try the following solutions in this order. If these do not work, please call the physician's office.
 - A. Decrease the amount of pain medication if your pain has improved.
 - B. Drink more decaffeinated fluids, including water.
 - C. Walk as much as tolerated.
 - D. Eat foods high in fiber (fruit, prunes, etc...).
 - E. Take stool softeners as prescribed while taking narcotic pain medication.
- Pain and Swelling Control
 - Emphasize pain and swelling control throughout post-operative week 1 and week 2. The swelling is brought down by elevating your leg and using ice.
 - Elevate (raise or prop up) your leg in your brace at all times when sitting or lying down. When elevating, your leg should be completely straight. Place pillows or blankets length ways under your leg, with an extra pillow under your foot to keep your knee straight (**do not place pillows under a bent knee**). Be sure your knee is above your heart level.
 - Use the ice machine or ice packs continuously on post-operative Day 0 and Day 1. Place a thin towel or sheet between your skin and the ice

pack to protect your skin. Beginning on post-operative Day 2, you may use ice up to 20 minutes every hour for pain relief.

- An ACE wrap is used to help control swelling. Use the ACE wrap continuously until your first follow-up appointment with your physician.

Prevention of blood clot formation after surgery

- Your post-surgical exercises may reduce the risk of blood clots.
- Your doctor may prescribe medication as needed to further reduce your risk. If so, please take as prescribed.

Activities for daily living

- **Diet**
 - Return to your normal diet.
- **Bathing**
 - You may either sponge bath or shower on post-operative Day 2. Wrap your limb in a waterproof bag to keep your bandages and brace dry. You should sit in the shower or edge of a bathtub for safety, do not stand in the shower.
 - **If you get your bandages wet, please call your physician's office.**
- **Weightbearing**
 - Your doctor will specify your weightbearing restrictions on the attached form from your physical therapist. If you are allowed to weightbear but had a nerve block, delay weightbearing until post-operative Day 2.
 - Crutches – **use your crutches until your first post-operative visit with your physician (approximately post-operative Day 10-14).**
- **Brace**
 - You may be prescribed a brace following surgery. Keep this brace on and locked fully straight at all times with the following exception: you may **ONLY** remove your brace to do your exercises or to use the CPM (continuous passive motion machine).
 - You must leave your brace on to shower (see above).
- **Exercise**
 - Begin the exercises on the attached sheet, labeled “Home Exercise Program,” by post-operative Day 1. Remove your brace to do these exercises 2 to 3 times daily. Do not push into sharp pain during any exercise, but gradually try to stretch farther each day. Let pain be your guide.
 - You may be prescribed a CPM (Continuous Passive Motion machine). Use as instructed. Your doctor will tell you how much motion to allow.
- **Driving**
 - **You may NOT drive until cleared by your doctor.**
- **Work/School**

- You may return to desk work or school within the first week after surgery. Any activity level high than the above must be cleared by your physician.

Physician Follow-Up

- Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety.
- Your Physician will discuss your surgery, show photographs of your surgery, and outline your rehabilitation at your first follow-up appointment.
- Be sure to make and go to all appointments listed on your discharge paperwork. Call your health care team if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to bring a list of the medicines you take to each visit.

When should you call for help?

Call your doctor now if you experience any of the following:

- Fever over 100.4°F (38°C) or chills
- Redness or drainage from the surgical incision site after post-operative Day 2.

Call 911 anytime you think you may need emergency care. For example, call if:

- You passed out (lost consciousness).
- You have severe trouble breathing.
- You have sudden chest pain and shortness of breath, or you cough up blood.