

Post-Operative Instructions: Knee Arthroscopy

You are recovering from arthroscopic knee surgery.

The following information is to help make your recovery as smooth and rapid as possible.

- 1) Elevation - Keep your knee elevated as much as possible. Elevate your operative leg for the first 2-3 days so your knee is higher than your heart whenever you are resting. You may get up to use the bathroom and to eat meals, but the more you elevate your leg, the less you will swell, bleed, or have pain.
- 2) Surgical Dressing - Keep your dressing on 24 hours after surgery. Do not get it wet. After that you can remove the entire dressing. Once the dressing is off you may shower. Soapy water over the incision is fine. But do not submerge (no baths, hot tubs, pools, lakes, swamps). Pat the incision dry and place regular Band-Aids over the incisions. You may keep it exposed, or alternatively can use the ACE bandage to cover if desired.
- 3) Bleeding - Post-operative bleeding is not unusual. Reinforcing your dressing as needed. If you have concerns about the amount of bleeding, please call.
- 4) Icing - Use ice packs as much as desired until you are seen in the office, typically up to 30 minutes every hour (a frozen bag of peas works well). Place a thin dish towel or wash cloth between the skin and ice bag. If your knee looks or feels swollen, regular icing will help speed your recovery.
- 5) Weight Bearing - You may place as much weight on your leg as you can tolerate. Remember that surgery will cause your thigh muscles to be weak, so take your time and be safe. Use crutches until your strength returns and you are stable walking without their support.

- 6) Knee Activity - Your post-operative therapy begins on the day of surgery. Initially you should perform ankle pumps (up and down motion), straight leg raises, thigh isometric contractions, and knee range of motion. No therapy should cause sharp pain. Stop all activities that cause this kind of pain. Work on the range of motion of your knee several times each day. It is important to get as much bend as possible, as quickly as possible; we typically want to see 90° of knee motion by the time of your post-op visit. Also make sure you can straighten your knee all the way and lift your leg up (i.e. straight leg raises).

- 7) Pain - Post-operative pain is expected, but should be controlled by the prescriptions given to you. Take the medications as directed. You are given enough so that regular use will span the typical period you experience pain. Do not mix alcohol and prescription pain medications. Your need for prescription pain medication should decrease after 3-4 days, and you should begin taking your usual over-the-counter pain killer (Advil®, Tylenol®), as needed. Be sure to take your antibiotics or other medications as prescribed.

- 8) Concerns - If you have any unusual problems; increased pain after the first 3-4 days, a temperature over 101.5°F, unusual rashes, circulation or sensation problems, or any other problem, please call our office.

- 9) Driving - Do not drive until you feel completely safe and able to handle the vehicle. You should not drive while taking prescription pain medications. Test your ability to drive in an empty parking lot, ensuring your reflexes have returned, and you are able to depress the pedals without causing yourself too much pain.

- 10) Activity - The typical recommendation is to stay home from work/school for 1-2 weeks to focus on the above listed recovery steps. Your recovery will be quicker if these recommendations are followed. You can return to home/computer work within 1-2 days, but commuting and being at an office or school with your knee dependent below your heart will prolong your swelling, pain, and timeline of your recovery.

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11) You will be seen in the office 7-14 days after surgery for follow-up. If you have any questions or concerns, please call us.