

Post Operative Instructions: Total Knee Arthroplasty

You are recovering from reconstructive knee surgery. The following information is to help make your recovery as smooth and rapid as possible.

1. Diet - Resume your normal diet at home. A well balanced diet promotes healing.
2. Activity – Weight bearing as tolerated on your legs. Use your walker as instructed by your physical therapist. Continue the strengthening and range of motion exercises as instructed. Your outpatient physical therapy will start in your home within the first few days after discharge.
3. Incision – You will have surgical superglue and mesh in place. You may remove the bulky dressing the day after surgery and leave the remaining dressing open to the air. You may shower after the dressing is removed. It is ok if the mesh gets wet. We will remove the mesh at your 2 week follow up appointment. You may apply a dressing if drainage occurs. If a different dressing was used we will give you instructions at time of discharge.
4. Icing- If you have an ice machine use this for 30 minutes at a time. Place a thin towel or pillow case between the cooling pad and your skin. You can fill the machine with ice or freeze a few water bottles and rotate them out once the ice melts. Make sure that the pad tubing is connected securely. If it is not hooked up tight it will leak water. If you do not have an ice machine frozen peas or a bag of ice works well too. Do not put the ice directly on your skin.
5. Hygiene – You may shower as described but avoid tub bath or hot tub after surgery until cleared by Dr. Smith/Chang/Jarvis’s office. Wash your hands frequently and try to avoid touching your incision. Keep your dressing clean and do not allow pets near the surgical site.
6. Work – You may not return to work until cleared by your provider.

7. You will continue on a blood thinner for four weeks after discharge for prevention of deep vein thrombosis or blood clot. Prilosec will be added once daily for GI protection while on aspirin therapy unless patient is already taking similar medication.
8. Continue to use the incentive spirometer every 2 hours while awake.
9. Constipation is common following surgery and can be prevented by increasing water and fluid intake, increasing fiber in the diet, and by adding Docusate sodium 2 tabs daily while taking narcotic pain medication. You may try warming equal parts of ginger ale and prune juice in the microwave for 1-2 minutes. This may provide relief of symptoms. If this is not effective, you may take Milk of Magnesia or over the counter laxatives.
10. Follow-up appointment in the Orthopedic office as scheduled – usually about 10-14 days post-op.
11. All dental appointments will require oral antibiotics after total joint replacement. No dental work allowed for the first 3 months after surgery. We can order this medication for the appointment. Make your dentist aware of your joint replacement.
12. Please bring a clean pair of underwear with you to wear during surgery. You can wear a pad or adult brief if needed for dribbling.