



OVERTURF

ORTHOPEDICS

Knee Replacement Post-Operative Instructions

WOUND CARE:

- After surgery, wounds are typically covered with an adhesive dressing and a compressive wrap. The Wrap can be removed 3 days after surgery. The adhesive dressing will be removed at first clinic visit.
- Place compressive stocking provided by the surgery center on the operative leg once the compressive dressing has been removed.
- Skin stitches or staples will be removed in clinic. In some cases, there may not be anything to remove (stitches are under the skin).
- You may shower once the compressive dressing has been removed (3 days after surgery). If the adhesive dressing becomes saturated or loose please call the office for instructions.

ICING:

- Icing is an important part of recovery from surgery. It is used to decrease swelling and inflammation.
- A refillable ice pack has been provided and should be used for 20 minutes every hour that you are awake.
- After the first 48 hours, the unit should be used in 20 minute intervals every 2-3 hours for the first 3-4 weeks after surgery.
- Keeping your leg elevated above your heart will also help decrease swelling.

DIET:

- After surgery, some patients experience nausea. This can be related to anesthesia or pain medication. It is best to begin with clear liquids and light food (crackers). You may progress slowly to your normal diet if not nauseated.
- Patients are often prescribed an anti-nausea medication after surgery. This can be used to treat nausea. If nausea or vomiting persists despite medication, call the office or your joint coordinator. Pain medication can also cause constipation. An over-the-counter laxative, high-fiber diet or fruit juice may be helpful.

MEDICATION:

- Most home medications may be resumed after surgery unless specifically directed by your surgeon.
- Medication will be given after surgery to prevent blood clots (Aspirin, Xarelto, Lovenox). The specific medication may vary depending on your medical history.
- Typically, patients are given a prescription for pain medication. Please take this medication as instructed to control your pain. After the first few days prolonging the time between doses may be possible if the pain medication begins to feel too strong.
- Try to take pain medication with food to help decrease nausea.
- Most prescribed pain medication may already have Tylenol (Acetaminophen) mixed with it. Avoid any other medications that include Tylenol while taking these pain medications.
- Taking medication prior to bedtime may help with sleeping.
- Do not drink alcohol or drive while taking narcotic pain medication (hydrocodone, oxycodone, dilaudid, etc.).
- Pain medication typically takes about 30-45 minutes to take effect. Don't wait until pain is severe to take pain medication.
- Some patients may receive a nerve block prior to surgery. This block lasts a different length of time in each patient, but typically lasts 12-18 hours. When you begin to feel some tingling in the extremity, the block is beginning to wear off. This is a good time to begin taking oral pain medication.
- Pain medication likely will not take away all of your pain. It is okay to have some discomfort.
- Due to the risks of prolonged narcotic use, narcotic pain medication will not be prescribed after 6 weeks from surgery. Plan to wean narcotic use accordingly.

ACTIVITY:

- A walker will be used initially after surgery for protection. These are typically needed for 1-3 weeks depending on the patient. Your physical therapist will help you decide when it is okay to stop using the walker.
- You may bear full weight on the operated leg immediately after surgery as long as you are in the knee immobilizer that was placed at the time of surgery. The physical therapist will determine when the immobilizer can safely be removed.
- Return to work depends on your job requirements, specifics of your surgery and pain/swelling levels. This can be discussed at your follow-up appointment.
- Do not resume sports, use exercise equipment or perform strenuous physical activity (including lifting weights) until your surgeon says it is okay.
- Physical therapy will be prescribed after surgery. This is a crucial part of your success.
- Return to driving after surgery is okay once narcotic pain medication has been stopped and you are cleared by your surgeon.

BLOOD CLOT PREVENTION:

- Though uncommon, blood clots (also called deep vein thrombosis or DVT) can occur after surgery. To decrease the risk of this problem, you should flex your ankle and toes up and down ten times per hour for the first 2-3 weeks after surgery.
- Elevation of the operative leg helps decrease swelling and prevents blood clots.
- Medication will be given after surgery to prevent blood clots. The specific medication may vary depending on your medical history.
- Be sure to let your surgeon know if you have a history of blood clots.

REASONS TO CALL THE OFFICE:

- Please call the office for any of these concerns:
 - Fever above 101.5°F
 - Excess pain or swelling of the calf
 - Excess drainage at surgical incisions
 - Worsening pain in the operative leg not controlled with medication
 - Excess nausea/vomiting
 - Redness around the incision site
 - Any other questions or concerns

FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENT

A post-operative follow-up appointment will be made for you at the time your surgery. This appointment is typically scheduled 7-10 days after your knee replacement. If you do not have an appointment scheduled please call our office.

Other: _____

