

DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS FOLLOWING ARTHROSCOPIC KNEE SURGERY

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- Keep your leg elevated on one to two pillows (above the level of your heart) and use ice to your knee as much as possible for the first few days following surgery. After the first few days and you begin increasing your activity, plan several rest periods throughout the day and elevate your leg above the level of your heart. This will help to relieve the swelling and pain.
- Crutches are to be used only as long as you feel the need for them.
- You may put as much weight on the operative leg as feels reasonably comfortable. You may also begin bending the knee when you are comfortable.
- Avoid strenuous activity involving your knee until you are seen by the doctor.
- Begin doing the exercises listed and demonstrated in your Arthroscopy booklet the day after surgery (Quadriceps sets, Straight leg raises, and Heel slides).
- Until you resume more normal activity, work at pumping your ankles frequently (every 1-2 hours). This helps with circulation and preventing blood clots from forming.

SPECIFIC FOR LATERAL RELEASES:

- If your doctor chooses to use an immobilizer, this may be removed after one week.
- You may put as much weight on the operative leg as feels comfortable, but it may take about one week to be comfortable with full weight bearing without your crutches.
- You may begin working on range of motion exercises when you are comfortable (Quadriceps sets, Straight leg raises, and Heel slides).

SPECIFIC FOR PATELLAR REALIGNMENT:

- The knee immobilizer needs to be worn for four weeks.
- You may remove your immobilizer for range of motion exercises, when lying around, and at night. However, you may be more comfortable wearing the immobilizer for the first week following surgery.
- You must wear the immobilizer when walking.
- You may work on range of motion exercises when you are comfortable (Quadriceps sets, Straight leg raises, and Heel slides).

WOUND CARE

- Bleeding during the first 24 hours following surgery is normal. If bloody drainage is noted through the ace wrap, do not remove the existing dressing, but apply a fresh layer of dressing and a new ace wrap (elastic bandage) over top. Apply direct pressure over the area where the drainage is noted. Lie down, elevate your leg, and apply ice. If the drainage continues throughout the night, call the office for further instructions.

- You may remove your dressing after three days (unless your physician instructs you otherwise) and cover your incision sites with bandaids. Change these daily and as needed until the incision sites are completely scabbed.
- Keep your incision sites dry until they are completely scabbed. This will take about 3-5 days.
- You may shower. Cover your incision sites prior to showering if they are draining.
- No tub baths, hot tubs, or swimming in a pool or lake until your incision sites are completely healed (at least two weeks). Do not soak your knee under water.
- You should have an ace wrap on your leg. This aids in circulation and to keep swelling down. You need to continue wearing this for one week following surgery. If it becomes wrinkled and needs to be rewrapped, apply it with your leg elevated on the bed or couch. Begin at your ankle and wrap past your knee. Apply it snugly, but not too tight. If your ace wrap is too tight, your toes will swell and become discolored. If this happens, loosen the ace wrap.
- Swelling and discoloration/bruising of the knee is expected. This will gradually resolve.

PRECAUTIONS

Notify the office if you:

- Develop a temperature greater than 100.5 that is not associated with any other illness. It is not necessary to take your temperature every day. If you feel warm, take your temperature.
- Develop new or more severe pain that cannot be controlled by the pain medication.
- Develop redness, swelling, drainage, or foul odor from your incision sites.
- Have persistent numbness or tingling of the foot.
- Develop calf pain, chest pain, or shortness of breath.
- Have any questions or problems.

MEDICATIONS

- A prescription for pain medication may be given to you by your doctor prior to your discharge from the hospital. These medications are used to reduce your pain ***and must not be taken any more often than prescribed.*** In an effort to keep your pain under good control, you should take the pain medication routinely as prescribed during the first 24-48 hours following surgery. Then, as the pain lessens, begin taking it as needed (within the prescribed guidelines). As you become more comfortable, you may substitute Tylenol for pain control.
- Pain medication should be taken with food as this will help to prevent any stomach upset.
- Requests for pain medication should be made during normal office hours. Please Note: Pain medication will only be ordered during regular office hours.
- **Do not drive while taking pain medications.**
- **Do not drink alcoholic beverages while taking pain medications.**
- Ice may be used to the knee to help with swelling and pain relief.
- Take one aspirin twice a day for two weeks following your surgery. This thins your blood and helps to prevent blood clots from forming.
DO NOT TAKE ASPIRIN if you have an allergy to aspirin, have a history of ulcer disease, or if another blood thinning medication was ordered for you when you were discharged from the hospital.
- You may resume your routine medications unless otherwise instructed.
- Often pain medication and inactivity cause constipation. Eat high fiber foods (fresh fruits, vegetables, bran) and increase your fluid intake if possible. Also, you may purchase Pericolace, a stool softener, at any pharmacy to aid in alleviating your constipation. Take this two times per day.

DIET

- After having General Anesthesia, start by taking liquids such as water or carbonated soft drinks. If this does not upset your stomach, try soup and crackers. After this, you may resume your normal diet as tolerated.

FOLLOW UP

- You should be seen in the office for follow up 10-14 days following your surgery. Call the office when you are discharged from the hospital to schedule this appointment.
- Our office has a physician available by phone 24 hours a day for emergency orthopaedic needs. Routine questions, including requests for pain medication, are best handled during weekday business hours, Monday through Friday, from 8:00am until 5:00pm.