



Discharge Instructions for Knee Arthroscopy

Bandages & Ace Wrap:

- Your incisions were closed with sutures. If you have small white tape (called Steri-Strips) over the incision, it should be left in place until your sutures are removed 10 to 12 days after surgery.
- The gauze pads help absorb some water that will leak from your knee for the first couple hours after surgery. Occasionally, there will also be a small amount of blood mixed with this water - this is normal.
- The outer layer is an ace wrap for compression to help prevent swelling of the knee.
- You can remove this dressing **THREE** days after surgery. The sutures can be covered with band aids to prevent catching on clothes. The ace wrap should be used for at least a few days after surgery to help control swelling.

Ice, Elevation & Cold Therapy:

One important goal following surgery is to minimize swelling around the knee. The best way to achieve this is with the frequent application of ice and by keeping the leg elevated. Ice should be applied to the knee for a maximum of 20 minutes at a time with a minimum of 40 minutes between icing. Be sure not to apply the bag of ice directly on the skin, use a small towel as a barrier. Icing is most important the first 72 hours following surgery. It is also important to keep the entire leg elevated on a couple of pillows to help reduce swelling.

Walking & Crutches:

- You may put your full weight on the operative knee when walking as soon as it feels comfortable. Crutches can be used for 1-2 days after surgery but can be discontinued if you feel comfortable walking without any additional support.
- *Crutch Adjustment:* The crutch length will be set at your height so that there is about two to three fingers between the top of the crutch and the armpit. The handgrip should be adjusted so that your elbow bends slightly in the standing position. Do not carry your weight in your armpits or lean on your crutches because this can put pressure on your nerves.
- *Crutch walking:* Raise both crutches and place them about 12 inches in front of your body. Advance both crutches and weak foot forward at the same time. Push against the hand grips as you shift your weight forward. End with your strong foot ahead of the crutches. Repeat the sequence.

Physical Therapy

Please start range of motion as soon as the knee is comfortable - this should take no more than 1-2 days. Physical therapy is not routinely needed but may be used in some cases. Do not return to sports or strengthening until you are cleared by your doctor.

Washing & Bathing:

You should be careful to keep the wound clean and dry for the first 72 hours after surgery. Beginning on the fourth day after surgery it is OK to shower. If you have Steri-Strips it is ok to get them wet (they won't come off). Let the soapy water run over the incision but do not rub. This shower should be quick. No baths/pool/or soaks.

**Medications:**

- Please use narcotic medications (Norco, Percocet) sparingly and slowly try to decrease the amount and frequency over the next two weeks. Many patients find that taking it an hour before therapy and before going to bed is very helpful in managing pain.
- Over the counter medications such as an anti-inflammatory (Aleve) or acetaminophen (Tylenol) can help reduce pain. If you choose to take anything other than what was prescribed, please consult the pharmacist to ensure that you are not overdosing on a certain class of medication which can lead to severe kidney/liver damage.
- One of the side effects of narcotics is constipation. Be sure you drink plenty of fluids, and take a fiber supplement such as methylcellulose (Citrucel) or psyllium (Metamucil) or a stool softener like docusate (Colace).
- Please continue all medications that you were taking prior to your surgery in additions to the medications prescribed for post-operative pain. If you have questions regarding those medications that you were on prior to surgery, please contact your primary care physician.

Driving:

You may NOT drive if you are on crutches or while taking any narcotic pain medications. We recommend testing your driving ability in an empty parking lot before driving on the street/highway.

Work:

Return to work may require a few days for desk work, a few weeks for standing work and up to 6 weeks for heavy work.

Follow-up Appointments:

- Your first post-operative appointment will be in 10-14 days.
- If you do not have these appointments set up, please call the appointment line
- If there is an emergency and you are unable to reach anyone in the office, please go straight to the emergency room.

When to call for help:

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

You pass out (lose consciousness).

You have severe trouble breathing.

You have sudden chest pain and shortness of breath, or you cough up blood.

You have severe nausea or vomiting.

Call the office if:

You have pain that does not go away after you take pain pills.

You have a fever over 100.4°F.

You have loose stitches, or your incision comes open.

Your incision keeps bleeding 3 days after your surgery.

You have signs of infection, such as redness around incision or pus draining from your incision.