



Discharge Instructions for Total Knee Replacement

Wound Care:

- Absorbable suture and skin glue was used to close the skin.
- Keep dressing on for 3-5 days. After removing the dressing, keep wounds covered with clean dry gauze.
- OK to get wet in shower after 3-5 days. Do not scrub over the incisions - Let the soapy water run over the incision but do not rub. Pat dry with a clean towel
- Do not submerge in water until incisions are fully healed, this may take up to 4 weeks.

Activity:

- WBAT you may need the assistance of a walker / cane up to six weeks after surgery.
- **Home Health Physical Therapy** – Recommended for the first 2 weeks
- **Physical Therapy** – Formal physical therapy usually starts 2 weeks after surgery. An independent therapy program should be done every day. This is important in re-training your gait and regaining mobility.
- **No Driving** - It may be 2-3 months before it is safe for you to drive. You must have full control of your leg AND be off narcotic medications completely in order to drive.
- **Work** - Return to work may require 4-6 weeks for office work and over 3 months for standing/labor intense work.

Medications:

- You have been prescribed a combination of medications to help with post operative pain. Please take them as prescribed. You do not need refills of it once they run out.
- We recommend **Aspirin 81 mg two times per day** (only if you are not on any other blood thinning agent) to prevent blood clots during the first month after surgery
- To avoid stomach irritation, we recommend taking it with **Prilosec (omeprazole) 20 mg daily**
- Please use narcotic medications (Norco, Percocet, Dilaudid) 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.
- If you feel the narcotic pain medication is too strong, you may decrease use of the narcotic pain medication and use acetaminophen instead or between doses, not to exceed 4000mg/day total.
- 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 addition 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.



SUMMIT
ORTHOPEDICS
OF TEXAS

Sleeping:

Patients often find it difficult to sleep through the night during the first few weeks after surgery. If you are having difficulty sleeping, please try over the counter Benadryl 25 mg a night. If this remains ineffective, please call your primary care doctor to prescribe a short course of medication to help you sleep.

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.
- For the first few days after surgery the ice therapy is placed over your dressing, later it can be placed over a thin towel. Please check your skin regularly and discontinue the ice machine immediately if there is any sign of skin injury.
- Use ice therapy for 20 minutes every 1 hour for the first 3 to 4 days, then use it after physical therapy or times of increased activity for the next several weeks.

White TED Hose Stockings:

- These will help decrease swelling in your lower extremities after surgery. Please wear them for a total of 4 weeks on both legs. It is recommended to wear them during the day and remove them at night as well as daily for routine hygiene.

Preventing Infection

- Avoid elective procedures (dermatologic, endoscopy/ colonoscopy) and dental work for 3 months after surgery
- After 3 months, if you plan of having an elective procedure, please inform your doctors of your total knee replacement so that he/she may prescribe the appropriate antibiotic prior to any of the above procedures. Call your dentist for antibiotic treatment before dental procedures going forward.

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.