

Orthopedic Associates
Post Operative Instructions
Knee Arthroscopy

Anesthesia/Medication

- Due to the anesthesia given during your surgery, your first meal at home should be clear liquids or a light supper only. Remember to drink plenty of liquids during the first few days following your surgical procedure.
- A prescription for pain medication will be provided before discharge. Do not take aspirin for 1 week following your surgery. If your pain medication is causing nausea or vomiting, please contact our office.

Your Incision

- Your knee has been wrapped in a soft, bulky dressing to minimize swelling and help to absorb drainage that may occur following your surgery. Remember that some bloody drainage is normal. This dressing should remain on the knee for 24-48 hours, and it should remain dry. You may bathe or shower, as long as you are able to keep the dressing dry.
- You may remove the dressing yourself after 24-48 hours. Leave steri-strips, if present, on the small portal sites. You may clean the knee with clean soapy water, including showering, apply band aides to the portal sites, or dressings to absorb any continued drainage, and change them daily. Until your knee is checked by your surgeon post-operatively, do not swim, take tub baths, or use a whirlpool. The key is to avoid immersing the wound in contaminated water. You do not need to keep the area wrapped with the ace wrap. If your surgeon has placed your knee in an immobilizer following surgery, please continue wearing this brace after you have removed the dressing until otherwise directed by your surgeon.
- If your incision area looks red, is draining a white or yellowish fluid, please contact our office. Also, contact our office if you have a temperature above 101 deg following your surgery.

Swelling and Positioning

- Following your surgery, it is common to have swelling. In order to reduce the amount of swelling that occurs, please do the following:
- Elevate the knee above the level of your heart whenever you are not up and around. The pillows should be placed under the foot, leg and knee in a lengthwise position to prevent resting the knee in a bent position. Maintain this position for at least 20-30 minutes every two hours that you are awake.
- Ice your knee for 15-20 minutes while your knee is in this elevated position. You may use a plastic bag with ice and a little water, a bag of frozen veggies, or fill a zip-lock with three parts water and one part rubbing alcohol and freeze.
- Minimize the amount that you are up and weight bearing on the knee to only functional distances around the house (dressing, eating, bathing, etc...) for the first three days.

Walking and Exercise

- Use crutches or a cane to protect your knee and minimize the amount of pain and swelling. You may bear full weight as tolerated through your knee unless otherwise instructed by your surgeon. This means that you can place your full weight through the operated knee as long as the **pain and swelling do not increase**. If you notice an increase in the pain and swelling, this indicates that the knee is not yet ready to bear full weight and you should minimize the amount of weight placed through that extremity.

- Our general rule to determine if a patient is ready to bear full weight without crutches is when he or she can perform a **straight leg raise** (see exercise sheet) with the knee fully extended and locked. Your therapist will check this during your first physical therapy treatment session. If you are unable to do this, it indicates that your muscles are not yet strong enough to support you and can result in further injury to your knee. You will be asked to remain on crutches (or one crutch, cane or walker) until your muscles are strong enough.
- You may bend your knee as much as the dressing allows. After the dressing is removed you may bend your knee through a **pain-free** range of motion.
- No excessive stair climbing and no squatting.
- Do not use exercise machines, other than a stationary bicycle, unless specified by your doctor.
- Your surgeon and physical therapist have designed a specific exercise protocol for you following your knee surgery. These exercises are constructed in order to decrease the amount of swelling in your knee, to increase your strength and to increase your range of motion in a way that will not injure your knee.
- If you have any increased pain and/or swelling after performing the exercises that lasts for more than two hours. Please eliminate that specific exercise and notify your physical therapist.

Follow up Appointment

- We have scheduled your follow-up appointment. If not, call your doctor's office the day after surgery to make your follow-up appointment for approximately 10 days post-operatively. Also, you should begin your Physical Therapy treatment 3 days post-operatively. If you are not scheduled, or do not have a prescription for Physical Therapy, please contact our office.

Return to Work

- Generally, if you have a job with little physical activity, you may return to work on the third day following surgery. If your job requires considerable standing, lifting, or walking, then discuss your return to work date with your surgeon.

Thank you for following the above instructions. If there are any questions or concerns, please call your surgeon's office: (810) 985-4900.