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ORTHOPAEDIC SURGERY AND SPORTS MEDICINE

UCLA DEPARTMENT OF ORTHOPAEDIC SURGERY

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Post-operative instructions following knee arthroscopy

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- After discharge, look at the list of discharge medications discussed and given to you by your nurse or physician. Take the medication(s) exactly as prescribed and remember to look at the information sheets (provided by the pharmacy) for medication side effects of interactions.
- Become aware of the Danger Signals listed below
- DO NOT drink alcohol while you are taking pain medication.
- DO NOT operate machinery, drive a vehicle, sign legal documents or take responsibility for another person while you are taking pain medication.
- DO NOT return to work/school OR drive a car until you have been given permission by your physician.

Please read these instructions carefully:

1. For comfort and swelling apply ice to your knee for the first few weeks after surgery and then on a prn basis thereafter. Wrap the ice in a plastic bag to avoid getting the bandage and/or brace wet and always have a protective layer of cloth/towel between the ice and the skin to prevent frost bite. You can ice for 20 minutes out of each hour if desired, however, do not exceed 20 minutes at any one time. If desired, a cooling pad is available, yet sometimes this requires an out of pocket fee, which can be used at all times (i.e. longer than 20minutes) and is your to keep.
2. The first night after surgery you may see some blood on your dressing. This is normal. It is best to have the blood drain out of the knee onto the dressing rather than have it build up in your knee causing swelling and pain. If the dressing becomes extremely bloody reinforce the dressing with a large amount of sterile gauze and call our office.
3. You will be using crutches for approximately 1 to 2 weeks depending upon the amount of swelling and the speed at which your quadriceps muscle strength returns.
4. Return to the office for post-op visit in 7 to 10 days for a wound check and to ensure you have established a relationship with a physical therapist.

5. You can begin gentle range of motion exercises immediately with the therapist, if desired.
6. It is best to not shower for 4 days after surgery to allow the wound to close. If you must shower, your dressings must be covered by 2 separate waterproof covers or bags sealed above the brace and dressings. It is important to keep the incisions dry for at least the first 4 days. After showering make sure that the wound is kept dry and covered with a dry dressing. Pat the wound dry rather than rub the incision.
7. After removal of your dressing during your first clinic visit after surgery, you may continue to apply steri-strips (white piece of sterile tape) to the incisions as desired for one month to decrease the appearance of your scars.
8. Avoid prolonged sitting/standing/walking for the first 2 to 4 weeks after surgery. Alternate your positions.
9. For the first few weeks after surgery keep your leg elevated as much as possible. This is best accomplished when you are sitting or lying down. It is very difficult to elevate your leg to the level of your heart when you are sitting down. Elevate the knee above the level of your heart whenever possible.
10. You can expect to see some swelling in your foot and calf on the affected side. This is normal. Keeping your leg elevated minimizes this swelling. If the swelling does not improve with elevation of the knee, please call the office.
11. Take your pain medication (oxycodone) as directed on your prescription. Do not wait until the pain is intolerable. It takes 30 - 40 minutes to feel the effects of the medication after swallowing it, so start taking the medicine when it begins to hurt.
12. Other medications given include anti-nausea medication (Phenergan or Zofran) and anti-inflammatory (naproxen). Take them as directed. The anti-inflammatory should be taken with food. If you take aspirin daily then your aspirin should be taken 1 hour prior to any anti-inflammatory medication.
13. Eat your normal diet.
14. Return to work when you are released by your physician. If you have a desk job you can return to work approximately one week after surgery. Consider returning for half days temporarily.
15. No vigorous activities and keep the leg elevated as much as possible.

Constipation

The medications you have been prescribed for pain control can cause constipation in most people. This can be a problem. It may last as long as you are taking the medication. It is important to learn how to prevent and treat constipation. Some suggestions are included below:

1. Eat foods that have helped relieve constipation in the past
2. Eat foods high in fiber or roughage.
 - a. Fruits – fresh or dried fruits, especially those with skin or seeds (apples, pears, peaches, tomatoes, berries, raisins, and dates
 - b. Raw or cooked vegetables (not overcooked) - carrots, cabbage, peas, dry beans, lentils.
 - c. Cereals and flours – bran, whole wheat bread, rye bread and crackers, wheat beans, lentils
3. Drink prune juice

4. Sprinkle 1 – 2 tablespoons of unprocessed bran to your food.
5. Drink plenty of fluids - eight to ten 8-ounce glasses a day

If you experience any serious problems or concerning symptoms, please call our office at:

- Regular business hours: **424-259-9856**
- After hours/weekends: 310-206-6766 and ask to be connected with the doctor on call for the Sports Medicine Service.

Warning Signs. Call the office if you notice any of the following symptoms:

- Chills or fever over 101° F.
- Bleeding or fluid draining from the incision more than 5 days after surgery.
- Foul smell/cloudy drainage from the operative site.
- New numbness or newly discovered inability to move a specific muscle
- Increased pain
- Wound edges opening (dehiscence)
- Excessive redness at the incision site or swelling/puffiness around the knee/incisions
- Increasing pain, particularly in your calf muscle
- If you experience significant chest pain or shortness of breath, please call 911 and/or go to your local emergency room immediately as this may represent a life-threatening emergency. Please call our office to keep us informed of any such events.

Please call 424-259-9856 to make a follow up appointment or to confirm that you already have a follow up appointment scheduled. You should be seen by Dr. Kremen approximately 10 to 14 days after surgery.

REHABILITATION:

Rehabilitation after knee arthroscopy is quite variable and unpredictable. Please note the general guidelines outlined on the rehabilitation protocol you were given. The rehabilitation after surgery is an individual process, some patients may progress a bit slower or quicker than others. Often attempts at speeding up the process can ultimately slow down the recovery. Swelling, pain, quadriceps muscle strength and range of motion changes dictate how your rehabilitation will progress, so listen to what your knee is telling you with these various symptoms.