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**POST OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR:**

**LOWER EXTREMITY ARTHROPLASTY**

**ALL postoperative patients:**

1. Diet. Being with liquids and light foods such as jello and soups. Progress to your normal diet if you are not nauseated.

**24 hours following surgery:**

1. Be in the care of responsible adults.
2. Do not make important business or personal decisions or sign legal documents.
3. Do not drive or operative machinery.
4. Do not drink alcoholic beverages.

**Activities:**

1. Elevate the limb above chest level. For the foot this means “toes above nose” for at least 72 hours following surgery. Do not place a pillow under the knee when elevating your leg, instead place pillows under your ankle. The limb should be down only to go to the bathroom or otherwise should be elevated as long as comfort is maintained.
2. After the 72 hour marker, continue to elevate throughout the day whenever reclined and resting, but make sure to get up and ambulate with crutches during waking hours for 5 minutes every hour, to promote circulation.
3. Apply ice to the affected area as much as tolerated (20 minutes on, 20 minutes off). If you are using a cooling pad or a cold-water delivery system, this may be used continuously as instructed by the supplier.
4. Do not engage in activities that increase pain or swelling such as stair climbing or long periods of walking or standing.
5. Return to work depends on your type of employment.

**Weight bearing:**

1. Weight bearing is permitted as can tolerate with use of assistive devices as needed.
2. \*If you are given an leg immobilizer, please remove it once your nerve block has worn off.
3. Ambulatory aids, i.e. crutches and walking scooter are mandatory.
4. Nerve blocks can last between 12-15 hours on average and may be up to 24 hours. Please use caution guarding your leg as you will not be able to control it.
5. If an exercise sheet is given to you, perform the exercises per your physician’s instructions. Begin the exercises 1-2 days following your surgery.
6. Do not do exercises that are not permitted by your physician.
7. If you are given a brace, wear it at all times as instructed by your physician.

**Medications:**

1. A strong oral mediation has been prescribed for the first few days, use only as directed. Do not combine with alcoholic beverages. When taking pain medication, mild dizziness and drowsiness is not unusual. Be careful as you walk or climb stairs. Do not drive while taking pain medication.
2. Resume your normal medications unless otherwise instructed by your physician.

**Wound care:**

1. A small amount of blood and drainage is to be expected. If the amount is excessive, such as slow gentle oozing that saturates the bandage completely of bright red bleeding, contact your physician or the closest emergency room.
2. Your wound should be cared for in the following manner:
3. Keep the bandage clean and dry.
4. Keep the wound dry until you see your physician.
5. Change your dressing after 48 hours following your surgery. Wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds then place the Aqua Seal dressing on top of your incision site. Keep on until your first post operative appointment.
6. When bathing or showering cover the extremity with a plastic bag to prevent the wound and dressing from getting wet.
7. Continue to keep surgical sites dry during showers.

**Special Instructions:**

1. Call your physician at **(510) 739-6520** if any of the following occurs:
2. Uncontrolled pain.
3. Increasing swelling and numbness.
4. Color changes on the operated extremity.
5. Fevers (101.5 +) or chills.
6. Continuous drainage or bleeding from the incisions.
7. Redness around the incisions and pain.
8. Any other concerning symptoms.

**Call 911 or go to the hospital if you experience chest pain, shortness of breath or any other serious symptoms.**

**Follow up Care:**

1. Your follow up physical therapy and 2 week post operative appointment should already be scheduled. However, if you do not have scheduled appointments please contact Dr. Gay’s office at **(510) 739-6520.**
2. Any other questions and concerns may be routed to the Surgery Center at

**(510) 494-0800**.

1. Review further instructions as dictated below. If left blank by Dr. Gay, this is intentional.

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