



Post-Operative Instructions: Total Knee Arthroplasty

MEDICATIONS

Prescribed Narcotics:

- This medication may be taken as needed for pain as directed on the bottle.
- Do not drive or drink alcohol while taking this medication.

Acetaminophen (Tylenol):

- This medications may be taken as needed.
- Please use as directed on the bottle.
- Do not exceed 4,000 mg of Acetaminophen in a 24 hour period.

Blood thinner:

- Please take Aspirin as directed. It is important to take as prescribed to help prevent blood clots. It is usually taken for 6 weeks after surgery.

Stool softener:

- We recommend picking up an over the counter stool softer such as MiraLax, as a common side effect of narcotic pain medication is constipation.
- It is normal to take several days to make a bowel movement after surgery.
- Drink plenty of clear liquids as the anesthesia can cause dehydration/constipation as well.

WOUND CARE

- You may shower with your dressing in place. It will be removed at your first post-operative visit. If you notice the dressing has peeled up or is no longer intact, please call Dr. Rawal's office for further instructions and do not get area wet.
- Once your dressing has been removed, do not scrub the incision sites- you may let soap and water run down the incisions and pat dry with a towel once you're done. Once bandage has been removed, please Do NOT peel off the DERMABOND® PRINEO® mesh, as it provides an anti-microbial barrier. It will naturally peel off on its own 3-5 weeks post-op. It is ok to cut off the mesh as it peels off your incision so that it does not rub on your compression stockings and/or clothing
- DO NOT soak in any pool/bath water until at least 6 weeks after surgery.

ICE THERAPY

- Icing is very important in the initial post-operative period and should begin immediately after surgery.
- You may use the ice machine for 2 hours on, then remove for two hours during the day until your first post-operative visit. Care should be taken with icing to avoid frostbite to the skin. DO NOT PLACE ICE PACK / PAD DIRECTLY ON SKIN.
- Icing should not be performed while sleeping.



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ACTIVITY

- You may bear weight as tolerated on your leg. You may need an assistive device such as a walker or crutches.
- You may try to increase the amount of walking you do each day. To begin, walk 10 minutes every hour while up.
- Do not sit for longer than 1 hour at a time with your legs dangling down. You should have your legs elevated (higher than your heart) in a recliner chair or on the couch periodically throughout the day to help reduce swelling.
- The TED stockings should be worn during the day for three weeks after discharge from the hospital. They may be taken off at night.

PHYSICAL THERAPY

- Follow up with physical therapy as previously scheduled, approximately 3 days after surgery.
- Continue your physical therapy exercises at least twice daily at home.

EMERGENCIES

Contact our office at (608) 231-3410, if any of the following are present:

- Painful swelling or numbness (note that some swelling and numbness is normal)
- Unrelenting pain
- Fever (over 101° – it is normal to have a low grade fever for the first day or two following surgery) or chills
- Redness around incisions
- Color change in foot
- Continuous drainage or bleeding from incision (a small amount of drainage is expected)
- Difficulty breathing
- Excessive nausea/vomiting
- Calf pain
- If you have an emergency that requires immediate attention proceed to the nearest emergency room.

FOLLOW-UP CARE/QUESTIONS

- If you do not already have a post-operative appointment scheduled or if you need to change the appointment, please contact our scheduler at 608-231-3410 to schedule.
- Your first post-operative appointment will be scheduled with one of the Physician Assistants for a wound check, physical therapy protocol and to answer any further questions you have regarding the procedure
- Typically the first post-operative appointment is made for 10-14 days following surgery for suture removal if you have any sutures in place.



Limitations of Knee Replacement Surgery:

Knee replacement surgery in general is a very effective treatment option for arthritis of the knee, but knee replacements are NOT normal knees. The following paragraph will describe some of the normal findings after recovering from knee replacement surgery.

1. Numbness on the outside of the knee

Everyone will have a numb patch of skin on the outer part of the knee after surgery. The small skin nerves are cut during the procedure. These nerves slowly regenerate and the area continues to get smaller in size for the first year after surgery but many people continue to have a small numb area in the skin.

2. Swelling in the knee joint

Most people will have some swelling in the knee joint after activity for the first 3-6 months. Some people continue to have swelling permanently.

The skin and subcutaneous tissues thicken after surgery so it is very common for people to say that the surgical knee looks bigger than the non-surgical knee.

3. Clicking of the knee joint

A knee replacement is made of metal and plastic parts that move on each other during normal activities. These parts make noises when they move against each other. These noises typically decrease over the first year but may not disappear completely.

4. Pain kneeling

Some patients continue to have an uncomfortable feeling when kneeling on the knee. This is typically made better by kneeling on a knee pad or soft towel.

5. Stiff feeling in the knee

Stiffness in the knee after surgery is something that I hear from patients even after they have regained normal motion in the knee. Some people talk about a strap like sensation around the top of the knee joint. This sensation is not something that is fully understood at this time but is described by some patients after knee replacement surgery.