

Postoperative Instructions For Knee Arthroscopy

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After arthroscopy the wound is covered with an ace wrap. You may remove it in 24 hours. Due to the large amount of fluid used during the arthroscopy, it is normal to see some bloody drainage on the dressing. The dressing should be removed and wounds covered with Band-Aids on the first day after surgery. Reapply the ace wrap for 5-7 days to control swelling. Showering is allowed after post-op day 2. The wound may be exposed in the shower without scrubbing the area. The wound should not be submerged in a bathtub or pool until the sutures are removed.

Icing is very important for the first 5-7 days after surgery, but may be used as long as you like. Ice is applied for 20-minute periods 3-4 times per day. Care must be taken with icing to avoid frostbite to the skin.

Full weight bearing is advised unless otherwise instructed at the time of surgery. Rarely are crutches or a cane necessary. Leg elevation for the first 72 hours is also encouraged to minimize swelling. Range of motion, straight leg raises and ankle pumps are encouraged for the first 7 days after surgery and are to be started the evening of surgery. While exercise is important, don't over-do-it. Common sense is the rule. You will be provided with exercise instructions.

The anesthetic drug used during your surgery may cause nausea for the first 24 hours. If nausea is encountered, drink only clear liquids. The only solids should be dry crackers or toast. If nausea or vomiting becomes severe please call the doctor. A low-grade fever (100.5) is not uncommon in the first 24 hours but unusual beyond. Please call the doctor with any temperature over 101.0 degrees.

You may take a baby aspirin (81mg) daily until the sutures are removed in the office. This may lower the risk of a blood clot developing after surgery. Should severe calf pain occur or significant swelling of the calf and ankle, please call the doctor. Doing your exercises and following your post operative instructions will also minimize your risk of blood clots.

Local anesthetics (i.e. Novocaine) are put into the joint during surgery. It is not uncommon for patients to encounter more pain on the first or second day after surgery. Using the pain medication as directed will help control pain with little risk of complication. Taking pain medication before bedtime will assist in sleeping. It is important not to drink or drive while taking narcotic medication. You should resume your normal medications for other conditions the day after surgery. We have no specific diet restrictions after surgery but extensive use of narcotics can lead to constipation. High fiber diet, lots of fluids and muscle activity can prevent occurrence.

The doctor will need to reexamine you 2 weeks after surgery. Please call the office to schedule a follow-up appointment.

Most patients are able to drive if surgery does not involve their right leg as soon as they stop taking narcotic pain medication. Driving while under the influence of narcotic pain medication is dangerous and illegal. Returning to school or work depends on the degree of postoperative discomfort and the demands of your job and should be discussed with your doctor.

If unexpected problems, emergencies or other issues occur and you need to talk to the doctor call the office. After hours our answering service will route your call to a physician who will be able to advise you concerning your problem.