

Knee Arthroscopic Surgery Post-Operative Instructions

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1. Before you leave the hospital, you will be given a prescription for a pain reliever. This medication contains a narcotic with acetaminophen (Tylenol), so do not take any additional Tylenol. Use the medication as directed when the local anesthetic begins to wear off and then as necessary. You may take Tylenol instead of the prescription medication as the pain starts to dissipate.

2. If you have no history of stomach ulcers, frequent stomach upset, or intolerance to aspirin, I would like you to take 2 aspirin tablets (regular strength) twice each day on a full stomach (*e.g.*, with breakfast and dinner) for 4 weeks. This will help reduce swelling and inflammation in the knee and also aid in the prevention of blood clots. You may substitute Ecotrin (coated aspirin), Bufferin, or Ascriptin.

3. You should use your crutches but you may put as much weight on your operated leg as is comfortable. You may discard the crutches when you feel comfortable walking without them, usually within five to seven days. Excessive walking and stair climbing are not good for the knee for the first seven to ten days after surgery.

4. When you return home, elevate the leg on some pillows. The pillows should be placed under the calf so that the knee stays straight. Place an ice bag over the dressing for about 20 minutes three or four times a day for the first 5 days. Continue to elevate the leg on pillows when you go to sleep until there is no swelling in the knee or leg.

5. Begin straight leg raising exercises as soon

as you are able: Lie on your back, tighten your thigh muscles, raise your leg so your heel is about one foot off the bed, hold for 5 seconds, and then slowly lower the leg. At first you may not be able to lift your leg, but just tightening your thigh muscles will help restore strength. Repeat the exercise 10 to 15 times each hour. You should also flex and point your ankle as often as comfortable to pump the calf muscles.

6. The dressing put on in the operating room should remain in place for 48 hours. It must be kept dry when bathing. At 48 hours, you may remove the ace bandage and remove the gauze dressings. The paper strips that cover the skin incisions should be left in place. You may shower, but do not immerse or soak the leg (no baths). Pat the incisions dry. No additional dressing is necessary. You may use the ace bandage if it makes you feel more comfortable.

7. Call my office on the day following surgery to schedule a follow-up appointment for about 10 days after surgery.

8. If you have any of the following call me immediately at the office or via my answering service: calf or lower leg pains that make it difficult to walk; inordinate pain or undue swelling in the knee; bleeding through the dressing; numbness; coldness or tingling in the foot. If you cannot reach me go to the hospital's emergency room (or another hospital emergency room if you prefer) to have the problem checked.