

## **Post Op Knee Arthroscopy & Complex Surgery Instructions**

### **Instructions**

#### **Activity Level:**

If you had a simple meniscus trimming, you may bear weight as tolerated on the operative leg. Use crutches for 2-5 days as needed. Once you feel stable, you may discontinue their use, unless otherwise instructed.

- **Isolated Meniscus Repair** -you will need to have the brace locked while walking for 6 weeks. You are allowed to bend the knee when not walking on it.
- **Meniscal Root Repair, Microfracture, OATS or Cartilage procedures** - you will be **NON WEIGHTBEARING** for 6 weeks.
- If your surgery was on the right knee, **do not drive** while taking narcotic pain medication.

#### **Medications:**

Take one 325 mg aspirin each day, beginning the day of surgery for 6 weeks to help prevent blood clots. If you are already taking a blood thinning medication like Coumadin (Warfarin) or clopidogrel (Plavix), you do not need to take the aspirin (unless otherwise instructed by your physician).

You can resume your regular medication unless directed otherwise. You may use Tylenol, Motrin or other over the counter medications to help with pain. Narcotic pain medication may have been prescribed. Please take these post-operative pain medications as prescribed on the bottle. Do not take on an empty stomach. Guard against constipation by taking a stool softener (see separate constipation protocol). If you are having difficulty controlling your pain with the prescription you have been provided, please contact our office.

#### **Exercises:** *(see post-op exercise sheet)*

There are several exercises you can do before your first post-op visit. These include straight leg raises, isometric thigh muscle (quadriceps) contractions, ankle pumps, and bending/straightening of the knee. It is important that you do these exercises, not only to maintain range of motion and strength, but to decrease the risk of post-operative blood clots. At a minimum, you should be doing ankle pumps frequently during the first 2-3 days (at least every ½ hour while awake) to help prevent blood clots, and 50 sets of straight leg exercises a day. You may need to see a physical therapist after surgery. If so, the orders for physical therapy would be discussed and ordered at your pre-op appointment.

**Ice:**

For the first 48 hours, apply ice packs to the knee for 15 minutes every 2-3 hours, placing a washcloth on the skin/dressing first, then ice the knee 3 times a day as needed for swelling. Do not place ice directly on the skin. Some swelling and bruising of the knee is to be expected. Report swelling that involves the entire leg or calf.

**Dressing:**

Keep your dressing clean and dry. A small amount of bloody drainage on the bandage is to be expected. If you are concerned that it is excessive or needs changing, call the office. The dressing can be removed 72 hours after surgery. If the wounds are dry, you do not need to cover them. If there is a small amount of drainage, cover the incisions with band aids, and replace the ACE. Do not use Neosporin or other ointments on the incisions. Leave the sutures in place until your office visit.

**Showering:**

After 72 hours you may shower. Prior to that, you may sponge bathe only. Except for bathing, keep the ACE on until your follow up appointment with the doctor. Do not soak your knee in water for a minimum of 2 weeks so no baths, hot tubs, swimming, etc.

**Diet:**

Start with a liquid and soft diet the day of surgery. The next day you may advance your diet as tolerated. Fresh fruits and vegetables are important to prevent constipation.

**Deep Breathing Exercises:**

- It is important that you do coughing and deep breathing as instructed to keep your lungs open while you heal. If you do not practice deep breathing and coughing after surgery you may develop lung problems or pneumonia.
- To perform deep breathing exercises, take a slow, deep breath in through your nose. Hold your breath for 2-5 seconds, and then gently and slowly breathe out through your mouth with pursed lips (like blowing out a candle). REPEAT 10-15 times every ½ hour

**DO NOT Drive**, operate hazardous machinery, drink alcoholic beverages, or make important personal or business decisions for at least 48 hours after surgery, or while taking your pain medication.

**Report these signs immediately to your doctor:**

Excessive swelling/redness around your incisions, temperature of 101.5 or higher, excessive knee pain, calf pain, excessive drainage of blood or fluid, uncontrolled nausea or vomiting.

Have a responsible adult remain with you for the first 48 hours after surgery. If you have any questions or concerns before your next scheduled appointment, please call our office at 541-472-0603.