

POST-OPERATIVE KNEE CARE

WOUND CARE

The procedure of knee arthroscopy requires the continuous input of fluid through the knee. Following a knee arthroscopy some of the fluid is absorbed by the body and some comes out the arthroscopic incisions. If a drop of blood is mixed with water the fluid is pink. Do not be alarmed. Very little bleeding truly occurs during a knee arthroscopy.

If the dressing is wet you are welcome to change it. Please clean your hands with soap and water and then clean the incisions with a little mixture of 50% water and 50% peroxide. Either pour this over the wound or use a clean cotton swab. Apply a band aid over the incisions and then the ace wrap for mild compression until the swelling resolves.

SHOWERING

Following the surgery I would prefer you keep the incisions dry for the first 24 hours. When taking a shower or bath bacteria from other parts of your body may move to the incisions and lead to an infection. So for the first 24 hours you need to cover the incisions and keep them dry. I think water proof band aids purchased at a pharmacy work just fine. You can also sponge bathe, cover with a bag or any other method that keeps the leg dry. If it does get wet do not be alarmed just clean it as normal. Please do not get in a lake or pool until the wounds are well healed generally 7-10 days.

WALKING

Please use a cane or crutch to walk until you feel stable and do not feel there is a risk of falling. You may place weight on the leg as tolerated and we would like you to try to walk without a limp as much as possible. If you choose one crutch, be sure the crutch is placed in the opposite hand and you place the crutch and operated leg out at the same time, trying to walk with a smooth fluid motion. Using the crutch on the operated side may ultimately result in lower back and hip pain.

EXERCISES

You may begin exercises the night of your surgery and this is encouraged for a more rapid recovery. You should be given the exercises prior to your discharge. Begin them slowly and increase the frequency as your pain allows. At the completion of your operation we inject Marcaine and Morphine into the joint in order to alleviate your post-operative pain. Because of this your knee may actually feel better for the first 24 hours after surgery. Do not overdue the exercises and do not be alarmed if on the second day your knee is a little more painful. Keep ice on the knee for at least 30 minutes of every 2 hours during the first 48-72 hours.

DRIVING

This can be performed when you feel safe and are off the narcotics. I would recommend that you try moving your leg from the brake to the gas peddle prior to driving making sure this is easy for you before attempting to drive short distances. This usually takes up to 48 hours after a normal simple knee arthroscopy. Ligament reconstructions will require a longer period of time.

EATING

Eat a light meal initially and then you may eat normally if no nausea occurs.

PAIN CONTROL

We will give you a prescription for pain medications to help control your pain. Ice and elevation are also important to help keep the swelling down. I suggest use of Advil or Aleve as soon as narcotics are not necessary. An 81 mg. Aspirin is helpful to minimize risk of venous clotting. Medication will not be refilled after office hours and on weekends so try to think ahead.

QUESTIONS

Our office is open from 8am to 5pm daily. If you have a question please do not hesitate to contact me. Your question will be answered as soon as possible by me or my staff.