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POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR KNEE ARTHROSCOPY

Activities: Unless otherwise instructed you are to bear as much weight as possible and to discontinue your crutches when you feel comfortable, have regained confidence in your knee, and have a near normal gait (able to walk without a limp).

Dressing: After surgery, a bulky dressing and sometimes a compression stocking will be placed on your knee. You may remove the dressing 48 hours after surgery. It is normal to have a moderate amount of blood-tinted drainage on the dressing. If you need to remove the dressing, keep the steri-strip bandages in place and recover the steri-strips with band-aides. Make every effort to keep the incision clean and dry for one week after surgery.

Ice: You should apply ice packs to your knee often in the few days just after your surgery. This will decrease both pain and swelling. You may use store bought ice packs or simple zip-lock bags with ice, but place a washcloth or towel between the icepack and dressing to help keep it dry. Use the ice packs for 15-20 minutes at a time every 2-3 hours.

Driving: You may drive once you are off crutches, off your pain medication and walking normally. You must be able to brake firmly and comfortably.

Showering: You may shower by covering the knee with saran wrap or with a plastic bag by taping it securely to the top to prevent moisture from soaking the bandages or wounds. Never allow your incision to get wet as this may predispose you to developing an infection. You may get the incision wet in 20 days.

Medication: Although you have a prescription for strong pain medication, many patients are able to handle the discomfort post operatively with a milder pain

medication such as extra strength Tylenol. We prefer that you avoid aspirin containing medications in the immediate post operative period as these can increase the tendency for bleeding, unless you are prescribed these for another medical condition.

Exercise: Exercises are extremely important following arthroscopic surgery to help you regain motion, strength, and flexibility of your knee. Spend time each day supporting your foot on pillows, arm of couch, etc. so that your foot is supported and gravity will take your knee straight.

You will be started in a formal physical therapy program in your first post-operative visit, but you should perform the exercises that I have discussed with you prior to that appointment- ankle pumps, contract and relax with leg muscles. I encourage you to move your knee as normally as possible to help with the return of your flexibility and motion.

RETURNING TO WORK OR SCHOOL: You may return to work (sedentary) or school 2-3 days after surgery if pain is tolerable. Returning to heavy labor will be determined by Dr. Wert.

NORMAL SENSATIONS AND FINDINGS AFTER SURGERY:

- a. Shin pain
- b. Knee swelling and warmth up to 3 weeks
- c. Small amount of bloody drainage
- d. Numbness to incision area
- e. Soreness and swelling to back of the knee
- f. Bruising to lower leg (black and blue appearance)
- g. Lower leg swelling including the ankle. If this occurs, elevate the leg above the heart and apply ice to swollen area.
- h. Numbness to the foot – will resolve in a few days
- i. Low-grade temperature less than 101.5 degrees – if this occurs, drink plenty of fluids and cough and deep breathe (take 10 breaths, on the last hold for a second then forcefully cough a few times). A low-grade temperature is normal for a week after surgery.
- j. Small amount of redness to the area where the sutures insert into the skin. Low back discomfort due to the epidural/spinal anesthesia – apply heating pad as

needed

NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IMMEDIATELY IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SIGNS OR SYMPTOMS OCCUR:

- a. Change is noted to your incision (i.e. increased redness or drainage)
 - b. Sharp pains in the back of your calf (especially when you pull your toes back toward your nose)
 - c. Temperature greater than 101.5 degrees
 - d. Fever, chills, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
 - e. Sutures become loose or fall out and incision becomes open
 - f. Drainage becomes yellow, pus-like, or foul-smelling
 - g. Increased pain unrelieved by medication
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