

Total Knee Replacement Post-operative Instructions

Dressing/Wound Care

- Do not get the bulky dressing wet.
- Cover the bulky dressing with plastic wrap or plastic bag for showering to keep it dry.
- If the dressing gets wet, wash hands, carefully remove the dressing and replace it with clean, dry gauze pads and cover with an ace wrap.
- The bulky dressing will be removed on post-op day 2 by the physical therapist or nurse.
- On post-op day 2, the wound will be covered with a waterproof adhesive bandage.
 - Leave the waterproof bandage on for 10 days.
 - If the bandage gets saturated prior to 10 days, remove it and re-cover incision with a new, dry, sterile, waterproof bandage (can be purchased at pharmacy). If you do not have a waterproof bandage, cover with dry, sterile gauze and an ace wrap and keep the dressing dry until post-op day #12. Follow instructions below regarding staple and steri-strip care for showers.
 - After 10 days, remove the waterproof bandage.
- If there are **staples on the skin:**
 - The wound must stay dry.
 - Cover with plastic wrap or plastic bag to keep dry for showering until staples are removed.
 - The staples will be removed on post-op day 10-14 by the physical therapist or nurse and steri-strips will be applied.
- If there are **steri-strips on the skin:**
 - **Leave these intact until they fall off on their own.**
 - You may shower and let the water run over the knee. Pat the area dry with a clean, dry towel.
- If you see suture ends at each end of the incision, leave the suture intact. The ends will be cut by the physical therapist or nurse.
- You may notice a minimal amount of drainage from the wound once the waterproof dressing is off after day 10, this may be normal.
 - If drainage is staining your clothes, you may cover the wound with a dry, sterile bandage
 - If drainage is saturating the dressing or persists, please call the office as a precaution.
- No baths, pools, or hot tubs until told.
- Swelling or bruising around the knee is expected and can last up to several weeks.

Total Knee Replacement Post-operative Instructions (continued)

- Use ice over your knee for the first 24-36 hours after surgery to control swelling. You may place ice over the bandage for as long as you feel comfortable (recommend at least 20 min./hour). **Do not place ice or ice pack in direct contact with skin.**
- Low-grade temperatures up to 101 are common after surgery, please call if temperature rises above 101.4.

Ambulation and Movement

- Immediately after surgery you will be able to place full weight-bearing on your knee using a walker or crutches for support.
- You may ambulate as much as you are able to. Take breaks to rest, elevate and ice if you feel sore or if swelling develops in the knee or leg.
- Exercises will be taught to you by the physical therapist. You should perform these a few times daily.

Medication Take as prescribed

- You have been prescribed a few different medications. Take these as directed along with the recommended over-the-counter medications.
- Prescribed medications:
 - **Pain medication-** you have been prescribed medication for pain such as Oxycodone, Dilaudid or other narcotic pain medication.
 - Take these as directed on the prescription
 - Begin to wean off the medication as the pain improves. Start by spreading out the timing such as every 6 hours instead of every 4 hours, or by cutting down on the dose such as take 1 tablet instead of 2 at the time of dosing.
 - Do not operate machinery or drive while taking this medication
 - **Anti-nausea medication-** you have been prescribed medication for nausea such as Compazine or Vistaril
 - Take as directed on the prescription for nausea associated with the pain medication or anesthesia
 - **Blood Clot prevention-** you have been prescribed **Aspirin (ASA) 81mg twice daily** for 4 weeks for blood clot prevention.
 - Start taking the Aspirin on the morning after your surgery.

Total Knee Replacement Post-operative Instructions (continued)

- Avoid taking any anti-inflammatories including Ibuprofen (Motrin and Advil) or Aleve (Naproxen) until cleared by your surgeon.
- If you cannot take aspirin or NSAIDS, you have been prescribed Eliquis for blood clot prevention.
 - Follow the directions for Eliquis as prescribed starting the morning after surgery.
- Over-the-counter medication:
 - Add Tylenol 650mg every 6 hours for pain- use as directed, do not take greater than 4 grams of Tylenol per day.
 - It is recommended that you take Tylenol 650mg on a scheduled basis every 6 hours and add the narcotic pain medication as needed to maintain pain control.
 - Constipation caused by narcotic pain medication and anesthesia is common.
 - If you experience constipation, there are a variety of over-the-counter medications that you can try such as Colace, Senokot, Miralax. Dulcolax.
 - If constipation is severe, please contact your PCP for recommendations on bowel stimulants.
- Any severe itching, hives or difficulty breathing, please call the office immediately and plan to be evaluated in the emergency room.

Physical Therapy

- You will have been seen by a physical therapist from ProPT after your surgery in New England Surgical Suites.
- ProPT will be seeing you in your home within 36 hours of having your surgery.
- Physical therapy will focus on range of motion and ambulation.
- It is important that you continue to perform your exercises a few times per day every day.
- Physical therapy will continue in your home for about 2 weeks after your surgery. You will then be discharged to outpatient physical therapy where you will continue with the physical therapy protocol for total knee replacement.
- You will receive a prescription for outpatient physical therapy at the time of discharge from New England Surgical Suites. Please keep this on hand so you have it available to give to the outpatient physical therapy facility once you start outpatient PT at around 2 weeks post-op.

Total Knee Replacement Post-operative Instructions (continued)

- Speak with your home physical therapist regarding when to start making outpatient PT appointments. It can sometimes take several days until an outpatient PT appointment is available. You can have appointments already scheduled once you are discharged from home PT.

Return Visit

- If you do not already have a scheduled post-operative visit please call for an appointment on the next business day.
- The first post-operative visit is a telephone visit with the surgeon or physician assistant 1 day after surgery unless instructed otherwise.
- The second post-operative visit is 2-4 weeks after your surgery depending on your surgeon. You will be seen by the surgeon or physician assistant to review your progress, xrays and next steps in treatment.

When to call the office: 508-655-0471

- If your wound is continuing to drain 5 days post-operatively
- If your wound is red, hot and swollen
- If you have fevers greater than 101.4
- If you develop persistent calf pain
- If you have pain not well-controlled with the pain medication, Tylenol and ice
- If you have any concerns or questions
- If you do not have a post-operative appointment already scheduled