



Total Knee Replacement Post Operative Instructions

1. What operation did I have?

You had a total knee replacement.

2. What should I expect the day of surgery?

A nerve block was administered before your surgery. This will cause your lower leg to be numb and usually lasts until the night of surgery or the next day. When the block wears off, the knee and leg are often painful. I recommend that you begin taking your pain medication as soon as the block wears off. You will also start taking a blood thinner after surgery in order to help prevent blood clots. You will be on the blood thinner for 28 days after your surgery.

3. What medications should I be taking?

You will be given a prescription for pain medication after your surgery. You can take it as needed for your pain. Your worst pain and swelling is 72 hours after surgery. Once your acute pain starts to dissipate, you can switch to an oral anti-inflammatory (if you tolerate it well) such as Ibuprofen or Aleve.

4. Should I ice my knee?

Icing the knee and leg for the first 72 hours after surgery will help decrease the pain and swelling. I recommend that you ice as much as possible (20 minutes on, 20 minutes off). Do not fall asleep with the ice in place. I encourage you to continue icing the knee as much as possible even after 72 hours as it will continue to help with pain management.

5. What can I do with my knee?



You can move your knee, lower leg, foot and ankle as much as you can tolerate. After surgery you will start working with the physical and occupational therapists in the hospital. You can walk for exercise and advance your activity level as tolerated. You will continue to work with physical therapy on your range of motion. You will need to practice your exercises at home as well in order to ensure that you help break up scar tissue that can form after surgery. This will help you gain range of motion and ensure proper healing and outcomes.

6. Can I remove the bandages?

You will be seen in the office 2-3 days after your surgery. At that point, we will remove your bandages and apply a small dressing. After your first visit, you will be able to shower. Do not let the water soak/hit the incision directly. You may pat the incision dry after your shower and apply clean bandages. Keep your incision covered while out of the house and at physical therapy.

7. Can I drive?

It is your responsibility to determine if you can safely drive. You cannot drive while taking narcotic pain medications.

8. When will I start physical therapy?

You will start physical therapy immediately after surgery. Once you are discharged from the hospital you will continue with physical therapy either at home, in an outpatient facility or at a rehab center. The goal is to gain your mobility back and improve your range of motion. It is very important for you to complete the physical therapy course and do your home exercises in order to ensure you have good results after surgery.