
Post-operative Instructions for Total Knee Replacement

Wound Care

If you were discharged from the hospital with a waterproof dressing, you can shower with this dressing as soon as you feel safe getting into the shower. This dressing will need to be removed one week after surgery. Drainage on the dressing is normal. If the middle pad becomes saturated with drainage or the bandage loses its seal, it will need to be removed before one week post-op. After this dressing is removed, you will need to use a large non-stick bandage over the incision and staples to protect the incision. If you were discharged with the large non-stick pads as your dressing, these will need to be changed once daily.

You may get the incision wet in the shower after one week, once the incision is no longer draining. Pat it with soap and water, rinse then pat it dry. Do **not** use any ointments or lotions on your incision. The staples will be removed in the office at your first post-op appointment (around two weeks after your surgery).

Some redness and warmth around the staple holes is normal. Bruising and swelling around the incision, thigh, knee and leg is normal and may move down your leg into your foot and ankle. You need to wear the TED stockings given to you at the hospital only on the surgery leg all of the time except for showering, for two weeks. Do **not** submerge your incision in water.

Medication

You have been given an instruction sheet with all your medications and instructions on how to take them including medications you were taking before surgery. Please review this information.

You will be given a prescription for pain medication that you will need to take as needed to help make you comfortable. Because narcotic pain medication can cause nausea, be sure to take it with food. Pain medication may also cause constipation, so we recommend that you take a stool softener regularly, like Colace 100mg twice daily, if you are taking pain medication and not having diarrhea. MiraLAX, a laxative, may be used with Colace if you are still having constipation and can be taken twice daily as needed. You may also need other over-the-counter remedies like suppositories as needed. Be sure to drink plenty of water and eat nutritious, high fiber meals.

As your pain improves, gradually lessen the amount of pain medication you are taking. You may do this by increasing the time between doses of your pain medication to begin weening off this medication. Keep in mind that we are limited, by law, to how much pain medication we can prescribe to you at a time. Contact the office a few days before you need a refill. Refills will not be given after hours or during the weekend.

You will also be required to take medication to help prevent blood clots. Typically, this is Enteric Coated Aspirin 81mg twice daily for six weeks. If you have a medical condition that requires a different medication for thinning blood, you may be given a prescription for Xarelto or Eliquis. Take these as directed. If you feel you are having an allergic reaction or having problems with your medication, please contact the office.

Activity

You may bear weight, as tolerated, on the operative leg. You will need to use a walker or crutches for the first few weeks and then graduate to a cane for a few more weeks. You are to perform the exercises you were given in the hospital for a total of 60 to 90 minutes a day. You may divide the time doing these exercises throughout the day. Please visit Dr. Monesmith's website, www.EricMonesmithMD.com to review the post-operative exercises videos when you go home to ensure that you are doing them correctly. While you are sitting, you should keep the leg straight and elevated most of the time for the first few weeks after surgery. You will also need to ice your knee at least four times daily for 20 minutes at a time. Walk each hour you are awake. Staying mobile is one of the most important ways to prevent blood clots. In your discharge folder, you will have a prescription for physical therapy. You will need to call as soon as possible to set up your first few appointments. Your first appointment needs to be made the week after your surgery and no later than two weeks after your surgery.

Follow-up

You will have a follow-up appointment scheduled for your staple removal around two weeks after your surgery. You will then have another appointment eight weeks post-operatively, then at one year post-op. After that, you will be seen every 5 to 10 years or as needed. You should avoid any routine dental cleaning and colonoscopy for three months after surgery. After your surgery you are required to take an antibiotic one hour prior to dental cleanings for life. Please contact our office for this medication.

When to Call Dr. Monesmith

1. If your thigh or calf becomes excessively red, swollen and painful.
2. Your incision has increased drainage or foul-smelling drainage.
3. You develop a fever over 101.5° for greater than 6 hours.
4. For medical problems, problems with your blood pressure, or routine medications, call your family physician.
5. **Call 911 immediately if you experience sudden severe chest pain or difficulty breathing.**
6. If you have any concerns or questions, please call Kim (Dr. Monesmith's physician assistant) at **317.884.5347**. For scheduling, please call **317.275.6191**.