

## **Instructions Following Arthroscopic Knee Surgery**

**Mark H. Getelman, M.D.**

**Dressing:** The knee dressing may be removed 48 hours after surgery for showering. The small tapes (steri-strips) covering the incisions should be left in place. The stocking may be removed at the 48 hour mark for showering but then must be placed back on the leg for the next 3 days. (may be taken on and off for showering during this time)

**Showering:** Showers are acceptable after 48 hours, no use of bathtubs or Jacuzzi. After removing the dressing covering the knee keep the steri-strips in place, apply a clear plastic wrap (Saran wrap or press and seal). This should be applied for each shower until the sutures are removed. You need to keep your incisions dry. After showering, make sure that you dry the knee area. Your sutures are usually removed at your first post operative appointment.

**Bleeding:** In some cases, oozing at the point of incision can persist for several hours. If this should persist with the continued use of the compression dressing, contact our office. If the steri-strips covering the incisions are removed, this sometimes does remove the clot covering the wound, which is why we ask that you leave the steri-strips on until your first post op appointment.

**Swelling:** Swelling is common to experience especially around the knee joint. This may cause stiffness and discomfort. This may last for several weeks after surgery. To minimize the swelling, utilize the cold therapy unit supplied to you at the time of surgery or ice packs. The cold therapy should be used as often as possible, especially for the first 48 hours. Run the cold therapy unit/place ice packs for 2 hours on then 1 hour off, except while asleep, regularly the FIRST 48 hours. After 48 hours, run the cold therapy unit/place ice packs for 30 minutes on and 30 minutes off as much as possible until your post operative appointment. Make sure to protect your skin by placing a towel between the pad/ice pack and your skin once the bandages have been removed.

**Relief of Pain:** For mild pain, use medication such as Tylenol. Take 1-2 tablets every 4 to 6 hours as needed for pain. Do not take more than 8 tablets in a 24-hour period. For severe pain, a prescription for stronger medication was given to you at your pre-op appointment; please take the medication as directed. Do not drink alcohol while taking a prescribed medication.

**Aspirin use:** If you are over the age of 35 or are a female of any age taking birth control pills, you are instructed to take an 81 mg baby Aspirin daily after surgery for 2 weeks post op. This is done to help prevent the formation of a blood clot.

**Diet:** After surgery, drink lots of fluids and eat a bland, nutritious meal when you return home from the hospital and or surgery center.

\*\*\* do not eat or drink anything after midnight the night before surgery.

**Nausea and Vomiting:** Although unusual, both can be experienced after anesthesia in surgery. If you have a tendency for this, please discuss this with the anesthesiologist. Otherwise, it is usually alleviated with a clear liquid diet.

**Drowsiness:** After anesthesia, drowsiness may persist for up to 48 hours.

**Activities:** Crutches have been supplied for your comfort. They may be discontinued when you are comfortable ambulating and are able to walk without limping. This should only happen if you were instructed to do so by the nurse or doctor. In rare cases, a surgical procedure will be performed that will require you to be non-weight bearing after surgery. Your physician will convey the change in weight bearing status to you following the surgery if that is the case.

**Common complaints after surgery:** At times, patients complain of sensation of liquid within the knee joint; this is the reabsorbing of fluid from the surgery. Other complaints can be occasional clicking with movement; this is the readjustment of your muscles and control of the knee joint, which is usually alleviated with your ice and exercise program.

**Postoperative office visit:** Please refer to the back of your appointment card given to you at your pre op appointment. Your appointment should be listed there, if not please call our office and make sure a post op appointment was made for you.

**Signs of Infection:** With any surgery it is important to be aware of signs of infection, which can include: unusual looking incision such as increased redness or smell, drainage to be green or yellow, and increased fever. It is normal to have a slight temperature post operative, but above 101.5 degrees; you should contact our office.

**Signs of a DVT:** If you experience swelling in your calf on the operative leg or pain in your calf with flexion of the foot or with weight bearing, please contact our office immediately. If this occurs at night or over the weekend, please make your way to the closest emergency room immediately for an ultrasound to rule out a blood clot.

**Physical Therapy:** This usually will start one week post operative. We will communicate with you when you should start and will give you a prescription for the physical therapy.

**Recording of your surgery:** Your surgery is recorded and narrated by Dr. Getelman. You will receive a copy at your post operative visit.

**Common Questions:** How long is my surgery? 45 minutes to one hour. Will my family be able to keep me company? No, you will be in the first stage of recovery for about an hour. How long will I be kept at the facility? Plan on 3 to 4 hours total. How much weight can I place on my foot? As tolerated, use crutches to protect your knee from fatigue.

Please feel free to contact our office at any time if you have any questions or concerns.

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