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Instruction Sheet following Total Knee Arthroplasty

Showering:

You may shower 48 hours after surgery. Please use **CAUTION!!** Be careful not to slip and fall. The effects of anesthesia and/or medication may make you drowsy or light-headed. Do not submerge your sutures (stitches) in a bathtub, hot tub, or pool until the doctor tells you it is okay to do so (3 weeks after surgery). Once you are done showering pat the wound dry.

Dressing:

Remove ACE wrap and white cotton dressings 48 hours after surgery. Keep the yellow, rubbery bandage over your incision **ON**—this may stay on for up to 2 weeks and is waterproof (you may shower over this bandage).

Cane/Walker:

You may **weight bear as tolerated**/walk on the leg as you feel comfortable and may use a walker or cane as needed for walking. A walker is often needed for about a week, followed by transition to a cane, until you are walking assistance free.

Activity:

You may walk as much as you want. High impact activities such as jumping, aerobics, tennis, and skiing are not permitted during the first 3 months after surgery. These activities can contribute to accelerated wear and should be done with caution after this time.

Ice and Elevation:

You can ice the knee to reduce swelling and discomfort. Do not ice the knee more than 20 minutes at a time. Let the knee warm up for about 20 minutes before reapplication. When you are not walking your leg should be straight with a pillow under your foot or ankle (not behind your knee). Try to elevate knee as much as possible to reduce swelling. If you have a cryocuff, you may use this continuously. Do not apply ice directly to the skin.

Physical Therapy:

Aggressive physical therapy beginning the day of surgery is done to quickly regain mobility, range of motion and strength of the knee and minimize pain and swelling.

Medication:

You will be given pain medication that should be taken as prescribed. Please note that narcotic pain medication may cause constipation. Please remember to take stool softeners (Colace) when using narcotics to help reduce the chance of constipation. You should not use alcohol together with narcotic medication. Do not drive or operate complex machinery while taking narcotic



medication. Please note that most narcotic pain medications have side effects that may include nausea, vomiting, sedation, and/or dizzy spells. If you experience any of these side effects to a severe extent, you should contact our office. When your pain is well controlled (2 days to 2 weeks post-op), you may transition yourself to an anti-inflammatory and Tylenol.

You will also be discharged with a blood thinner, Aspirin 81mg or Lovenox 40mg, to prevent blood clots. You should take this medication as prescribed. It is important not to miss any doses of this medication. Please note that aspirin can cause an upset stomach or acid reflux. If this occurs, you may take an over the counter proton pump inhibitor such as Prilosec, Prevacid, or Nexium to help alleviate these side effects.

You should restart all of your prescription medications once discharged unless specifically instructed otherwise.

Follow-up visit:

You need to see the doctor about 10-14 days following surgery for your first post-op visit. At that time your sutures or staples will be removed if needed.

Common Concerns:

- Bruising and/or swelling of the knee, ankle, or foot are common after surgery. To relieve this discomfort it is best to ice and elevate the knee.
- You should not drive for at least 2 weeks after surgery. If you had surgery on your right knee or if you have a manual car, it could take 6 weeks or more before you feel safe behind the wheel. Please use common sense and do not drive until you can control a car safely. You should not drive within 6 hours of taking narcotic pain medication.
- Most people may resume sexual activity as soon as they are comfortable.
- Return to work depends on specific job requirements and varies from person to person. Please discuss return to work with your surgeon and primary doctor.
- Antibiotic preventative medication is required before dental or other invasive procedures to protect your new joint from infection. Discuss this with your surgeon.

Please call if:

1. If at any time you have discomfort, hardness, swelling, or redness in the calf (behind the leg between the knee and the ankle) please call the doctor immediately.
2. Any oozing or redness of the wound, fevers (>100.4 degrees F), or chills.
3. Any difficulty breathing or heaviness in the chest.

REMEMBER - these are only guidelines for what to expect following a total knee arthroplasty. If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to call the office.