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Post-Operative Instructions

Total Knee/Patellofemoral Replacement

ACTIVITY

Upon leaving the hospital you will still just be starting your recovery. You will be weak and require frequent periods of rest. You are encouraged to get up and about as much as you can tolerate.

PHYSICAL THERAPY

PT is the most important part of your recovery. You must see a physical therapist at least 2 times a week as soon as you get home. In addition, you will perform your exercises at home 4 times a day. These exercises will consist of range of motion and strengthening. A physical therapist will initially come to your house (if you have had a total knee replacement); however, as soon as you are able it is much better to go to a physical therapy facility for your PT. If you need help finding a therapist, please let our office know.

BANDAGE

Your staples will be removed approximately 7-14 days post operatively, this can be done by the nurse visiting your house or in our office depending on how easily you can get to our office.

SHOWERING

You must keep the incision dry to prevent an infection as it is healing. Use saran wrap over the bandages to ensure a watertight seal. Try to avoid the shower from hitting the incisions directly, do not take baths or get into a pool or hot tub. Do not apply creams, ointment or lotions to your incisions while they are still healing (approximately 3 weeks).

MEDICATIONS

You will receive a prescription for pain medication prior to your discharge from the hospital. Take one tablet for mild to moderate pain and two tablets for more severe pain. Please make the hospital staff aware of any allergies you may have to avoid medical complications. This may be taken with your pain medication. If you find that you are constipated from the medications, please feel free to use an over the counter stool softener or laxative.

ANTI-COAGULATION

After a joint replacement you are at an increased risk for a blood clot. You will either be placed on Coumadin or Aspirin for 6 weeks from the time of your surgery. If you are on Coumadin/Warfarin you will have your blood protime/INR monitored at home and you will check in at least once per week with either your primary care doctor or the doctor who cleared you for surgery at HSS in order to determine the correct dosage. Aspirin can affect your stomach, please be cautious and report to us or your medical doctor any stomach pain or heartburn as well as any changes in your stools.

COLD THERAPY UNIT/ ICE

Prevention of post-op swelling or inflammation is an important part of your recovery. Apply icepack/ gelpack/ frozen peas to the surgical site 20 minutes 4 to 6 times a day or use your cold therapy unit as directed in the instructions. Also, it is important to apply the ice/cold therapy 10-20 minutes after completing your physical therapy.

DRIVING

You may not drive while taking pain medication. If your surgery was on the RIGHT leg then it typically is at least 6 weeks before you can safely drive.

NORMAL SENSATIONS AND FINDING AFTER SURGERY

- a. Pain
- b. Swelling and warmth up to 2 weeks
- c. Small amounts of bloody drainage for first few days
- d. Numbness around the incision area
- e. Bruising
- f. Low grade temperature less than 101.0F for up to a week after surgery.
- g. Small amount of redness to the area where the sutures insert in the skin

NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IMMEDIATELY IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SIGNS OR SYMPTOMS OCCUR

- a. Change is noted to your incision (i.e. increased redness or drainage)
- b. Temperature greater than 101.0F
- c. Fever, chills, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea
- d. Sutures become loose or fall out and incision becomes open
- e. Drainage becomes yellow, puss like or foul smelling
- f. Increased pain unrelieved by medication or measures mentioned above.

REMEMBER TO CALL OUR OFFICE TO SCHEDULE YOUR POST-OPERATIVE APPOINTMENT (APPROXIMATELY 10-40 DAYS FROM SURGERY)