

Post-Operative Instructions Meniscus Repair

1. DIET

- Begin with clear liquids and light foods (jellos, soups, etc.)
- Progress to your normal diet if you are not nauseated

2. WOUND CARE

- Maintain your operative dressing, loosen bandage if swelling of the foot and ankle occurs
- It is normal for the knee to bleed and swell following surgery – if blood soaks onto the ACE bandage, do not become alarmed – reinforce with additional dressing
- Remove surgical dressing on the **third post-operative day** – if minimal drainage is present, apply band-aids or a clean dressing over incisions and change daily – you may then shave as long as the wounds remain sealed with the band-aid
- To avoid infection, keep surgical incisions clean and dry – you may shower by placing a large garbage bag over your brace starting the day after surgery – NO immersion of operative leg (i.e. bath)

3. MEDICATIONS

- Pain medication is injected into the wound and knee joint during surgery – this will wear off within 8-12 hours
- Most patients will require some narcotic pain medication for a short period of time – this can be taken as per directions on the bottle
- Common side effects of the pain medication are nausea, drowsiness, and constipation – to decrease the side effects, take medication with food – if constipation occurs, consider taking an over-the-counter laxative if you are having problems with nausea and vomiting, contact the office to possibly have your medication changed
- Do not drive a car or operate machinery while taking the narcotic medication
- Ibuprofen 200-400mg (i.e. Advil) may be taken in between the narcotic pain medication to help smooth out the post-operative ‘peaks and valleys’, reduce overall amount of pain medication required, and increase the time intervals between narcotic pain medication usage

4. ACTIVITY

- Elevate the operative leg to chest level whenever possible to decrease swelling
- Do not place pillows under knees (i.e. do not maintain knee in a flexed or bent position), but rather place pillows under foot/ankle
- Use crutches to assist with walking – you are not to bear more than 50%

of your weight on the operative leg unless otherwise instructed by the physician. No squatting $>90^\circ$

- Do not engage in activities which increase knee pain/swelling (prolonged periods of standing or walking) over the first 7-10 days following surgery
- Avoid long periods of sitting (without leg elevated) or long distance traveling for 2 weeks
- NO driving until instructed otherwise by physician
- May return to sedentary work ONLY or school 3-4 days after surgery, if pain is tolerable

5. BRACE (If prescribed)

- Your brace should be worn fully extended (straight) at all times (day and night – except for exercises) until otherwise informed by the physician after first post-operative visit
- Remove brace for flexion (bending) and other exercises done in a non-weight bearing position (i.e. lying or sitting)

6. ICE THERAPY

- Begin immediately after surgery
- Use icing machine continuously or ice packs every 2 hours for 20 minutes daily until your first post-operative visit – remember to keep arm elevated to level of chest while icing

7. EXERCISE

- Begin exercises 24 hours after surgery (straight leg raises, quad sets, heel slides, and ankle pumps) unless otherwise instructed
- Discomfort and knee stiffness is normal for a few days following surgery – it is safe and, in fact, preferable to bend your knee (unless otherwise instructed by physician)
- Complete exercises 3-4 times daily until your first post-operative visit – your motion goals are to have complete extension (straightening) and 90° of flexion (bending) at your first post-operative visit unless otherwise instructed
- Do ankle pumps continuously throughout the day to reduce the possibility of a blood clot in your calf (extremely uncommon)
- Formal physical therapy (PT) will begin after your first post-operative visit

8. EMERGENCIES

- Contact Dr. Howard or his staff at 831-648-7200 if any of the following are present:
 - Painful swelling or numbness
 - Unrelenting pain

- Fever (over 101° - it is normal to have a low grade fever for the first day or two following surgery) or chills
 - Redness around incisions
 - Color change in wrist or hand
 - Continuous drainage or bleeding from incision (a small amount of drainage is expected)
 - Difficulty breathing
 - Excessive nausea/vomiting
- **If you have an emergency after office hours or on the weekend, contact the same office number (831-648-7200 and you will be connected to our page service)
 - **If you have an emergency that requires immediate attention, proceed to the nearest emergency room.

9. FOLLOW UP CARE + QUESTIONS

- Typically the first post-operative appointment following surgery is 10-14 days following surgery
- If you do not already have a postoperative appointment scheduled, please contact the office during normal office hours (831-648-7200) and ask for appointment scheduling.
- The first post-operative appointment will be with Dr. Howard where he will assess the wound, go over post-operative protocol, and answer any questions you may have regarding the procedure