



# Town Center

## ORTHOPAEDICS

ASHBURN • CENTREVILLE • FAIRFAX • RESTON

PHONE: 703-435-6604

### **Post-Operative Instructions Following Ligament Surgery**

#### **1. WHEN DO I COME IN FOR MY FIRST FOLLOW-UP VISIT?**

If an appointment has not already been scheduled, please call the office the day following surgery to schedule an appointment for approximately one week after your surgery.

#### **2. WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT AFTER SURGERY?**

After surgery, it is normal to experience some discomfort. A pain medication prescription was sent to your pharmacy. Please use the medication regularly as directed for the first twenty-four hours and then as needed after the first day. Tylenol (Acetaminophen) may be used with or instead of the prescription medication.

If you have been prescribed Celebrex (Celecoxib), you should not take additional anti-inflammatories.

A low-grade temperature (99-101 degrees F) is common. Please call the office if your temperature is consistently elevated over 101.5 degrees.

Try to keep the surgical leg elevated for the first two days when you are resting. Your knee should be elevated above your heart. This can best be done by placing pillows under your calf.

#### **3. WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP REDUCE SWELLING AND DISCOMFORT?**

Limiting your activities and resting with your knee elevated above your heart are the best methods of reducing swelling and discomfort. This will also help speed up your recovery. You may have a cool therapy device. If this is the case, the company's representative should have provided you with instructions on its proper use. If not, please call their office for assistance. If you cannot reach them, please call our office. Ice may also be used. This is equally effective and can be done by filling a plastic bag with ice cubes and placing it over your knee with a towel between the skin and the ice bag. Leave the ice in place for 15-30 minutes. This may be done every hour while awake.

With regard to your activity level, use common sense as your guide. Advance your daily activities as tolerated. No running, jumping or risky activities are permitted. Full weight bearing on your operative leg should be avoided. You should have been informed on how much weight is permitted (no weight-bearing or 50%). While upright and ambulating, you should always wear the brace provided.

Be careful while climbing and descending stairs. Painful activities are to be avoided. Initially, it is best to limit your activities to those that are necessary. This will help reduce your swelling and discomfort.

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#### 4. HOW LONG SHOULD I KEEP MY KNEE DRY AND WEAR THE BANDAGE?

The bandage should be kept dry and in place for 48 hours. For the first 48 hours, it is best to take baths with your knee hanging out of the tub so that the dressing may remain dry.

Forty-eight hours after surgery please remove and discard the bandages. There may be some dried blood on the bandages and knee. This is normal. In addition, there will be several stitches. After you remove the bandage, you may get your knee wet in the shower. Do not use a bath or place any creams or lotions on the incisions.

Be very careful when showering, it is normal for your leg to be very weak following the surgery. A stool placed in the shower so that you can sit, may be helpful.

#### 5. HOW MANY DAYS SHOULD I USE MY CANE OR CRUTCHES?

You are to be either nonweightbearing or at most, partial weight-bearing on your surgical leg. Either way, this will require that you use crutches while walking. If partial weight-bearing, only place about 50% of your weight on the ground with your foot flat on the floor, rather than landing on your toe.

While ambulating, it is recommended that you use the knee immobilizer or brace. Your weight-bearing will be restricted 4-6 weeks. We will guide you when it is ok to progress to full weight-bearing. It is ok and recommended to remove the brace while in bed and not ambulating. It is ok to bend and straighten your knee. Just don't force your knee bent. Rather let it bend to the amount that is comfortable.

#### 6. WHAT EFFECTS MIGHT I NOTICE FROM THE ANESTHESIA?

If you had general anesthesia, some fatigue and lethargy may be noticeable for a day or two. Occasionally, nausea may occur. Eating light foods will help. Resume your regular diet as the nausea resolves.

If you had a block as well, soreness in the area of injection is common. Ice to this area is helpful in reducing discomfort. Apply it for 15 - 30 minutes three times a day. The soreness should resolve by three to four days following the surgery. If, by that time, it has not resolved, or it is getting worse, please call our office or call the hospital and ask for the anesthesia office.

#### 7. WILL I HAVE AN EXERCISE PROGRAM TO FOLLOW?

You have been given my physical therapy protocol and you will be emailed a physical therapy prescription. If you have not already scheduled physical therapy, please call and schedule an appointment as soon as possible. **You should try to begin therapy prior to your initial follow-up appointment with us.** If you have any difficulty arranging the therapy, call our office for assistance.

#### 8. WHAT ELSE CAN I EXPECT?

1. Numbness around the incision site initially is often from the anesthesia block, if administered. Later it is usually due to involvement of superficial nerves in your skin during the operation. This is normal and unavoidable. Most of this will resolve over time but a small area the size of a quarter may often remain numb.
2. A sudden rush or feeling of fullness with pain in the knee when going from sitting to a standing position is common following surgery. This will resolve as the swelling resolves.
3. Bruising and/or swelling of the shin and ankle are common after surgery. This is caused by bleeding from the bone and soft tissues (that are cut during surgery) into the area just deep to the skin. To reduce this, it is best to ice the leg. If at any time you have discomfort, swelling or redness in the calf (behind the leg between the knee and ankle), please call our office immediately.

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