

DR. WOODSON POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS: TOTAL KNEE REPLACEMENT

WOUND CARE, DRESSINGS AND SHOWERING

You will have a long compression stocking over your leg along with the battery powered PICO wound vac dressing covering your incision. You are to wear the compression stocking for 2 weeks as it will help with the swelling in your leg. If you notice that the PICO dressing becomes soaked underneath, give our office a call and we will arrange for you to come to the office to change the PICO dressing. After 7 days, the battery will run out and you may disconnect the battery pack but keep the PICO dressing on until your first post-op visit where we will remove it along with your staples.

Bruising and swelling to the thigh, knee and leg is common after surgery.

You are allowed to shower with the PICO dressing on as it is water resistant on the outer layer. When showering, be sure to disconnect the PICO dressing from its battery pack and have the connecting tube facing down away from the water. Do not soak the dressing or expose it to water jets as it may cause it to fall off. When you finish your shower, remember to reconnect the battery.

Until cleared by the surgeon:

- Do not use a hot tub, Jacuzzi, swimming pool, bath or submerge yourself in any other body of water.
- Do not apply any creams, lotions or ointments over the incisions.

PHYSICAL THERAPY

You will be evaluated by a physical therapist before discharge from the hospital. The physical therapist will assist you in ambulating, with or without the use of a walker. Depending on what was arranged, you will begin physical therapy either at home or as an outpatient the week following your surgery.

BRACING, WEIGHTBEARING AND ACTIVITY

There will be no restriction on the amount of weight you can put on your leg, unless otherwise specified. As you progress in physical therapy, your activity levels will increase. Home exercises will be given with the goal of getting the knee straight (0°) and bending your knee to at least 90° (bending of knee in a chair) and beyond.

If surgery was done on your right knee, you will be unable to drive until you have strengthened the knee and increased range-of-motion. Typically, return to driving will be about 6 to 8 weeks after surgery.

PAIN MANAGEMENT, ICING AND SWELLING

A prescription for pain medication will be given following surgery. Keep in mind that the pain medication may alter your ability to drive, and it is illegal to do so while on the medication. Also, do not make major life decisions while taking the pain medication as you may be impaired.

Icing the knee is a great way to reduce pain and inflammation while also reducing the need of pain medication and speeding up the recovery process. You are encouraged to ice the knee multiple times a day. Never apply ice directly over the skin, wrap the ice around a small damp towel and apply it to the knee for 20 minutes at a time. Alternatively, you may utilize a continuous flow ice machine. Always ice after physical therapy and exercise for weeks following surgery.

Elevation of your leg will also help with reduction of pain and swelling. When elevating your leg, place cushions or pillows under your heel and calf so that your knee is at least 12 inches above the level of your heart.

BLOOD CLOT PREVENTION

To prevent the development of blood clots after surgery, you will be started on a full dose Aspirin 325mg to be taken twice a day for 4 weeks after surgery. If you were already taken a baby aspirin (81mg), you will instead take the full dose then after 4 weeks resume your normal baby aspirin dose. If you were already taking a different blood thinner for another medical condition, then you would resume your normal blood thinner medication instead of the aspirin.

POST-OPERATIVE VISIT

Your first post-op visit is within 2 weeks after surgery. If you have any questions or concerns before then, call the office to speak to our on-call provider who can assist you. Signs and symptoms to look out for include fever over 102°, difficulties breathing, increased pain and swelling to the calves, purulent drainage (thick white or green in color) from the wound, or increase redness to the wound.