

What To Expect After Surgery

Chase D. Smith, MD

TOTAL KNEE ARTHROPLASTY (KNEE REPLACEMENT)

Day of Surgery

- Most people go home the same day of surgery. Some people do require an overnight stay with discharge home the next morning.
- You will receive a long-acting numbing medication at the time of surgery that may last 18-24 hours. You will begin oral pain medication immediately after surgery.
- You will begin physical therapy and ambulate in the hospital prior to your discharge home. Therapy will be continued in an outpatient setting after discharge.

Post-Operative Care at Home

- You will use a walker for 2-4 weeks, but will be able to put weight on the involved leg as tolerated.
- Ice the area several times per day for 20 minutes at a time (minimum of 20 minutes between sessions).
- Use the ace wrap for compression until the swelling has resolved, which is usually 1-2 weeks.
- Do not get the incisions wet until your post-op visit. You should be discharged from the hospital with bandage over the incision. You may remove the outer bandage on post-op day #2. Leave the mesh dressing that is underneath the outer dressing intact until instructed. Cover the incision with waterproof bandages for hygiene.
- You will need to take a 325mg dose aspirin daily until we instruct you to discontinue, which is usually 4-6 weeks. If you were on a blood thinner prior to surgery, you will resume that on the day after surgery instead.
- We recommend that you do not attempt to drive until you are 1. Off pain medication, 2. If the involved leg is your right, you need to ensure that you can safely move your foot from pedal to pedal and your reflexes are well recovered – this may take up to 4 weeks. Check with your automobile insurance company before driving.

Pain Control

- Ice, elevation, and compression will help control swelling and pain.
- We recommend you take the pain medication *as prescribed* for the first week after surgery, then decrease as tolerated. Do not skip any doses until your pain is well controlled.
- Schedule pain medication so that you can take a dose about 30 minutes prior to physical therapy sessions.
- Even with pain medication, some discomfort or pain is normal, however, if you are experiencing a significant *increase* in pain, please notify our office at (334)793-2663.
- You should receive a prescription for pain medicine, Aspirin, and anti-nausea medication before leaving the hospital. You will also receive a prescription for a medication to decrease the risk of blood clots.

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Infection Prevention

- Infection prevention is always one of our primary goals.
- You received an antibiotic through your IV at the time of surgery, therefore you will not need an oral antibiotic.
- It is normal to have swelling, discomfort, some heat around the surgery site, or a low-grade fever (<100 degrees).
- Notify our office if, after 24 hours, you have marked and sudden increase in swelling, pain, or heat in the joint or persistent fever > 100 degrees.

Physical Therapy

- You will begin physical therapy on the first or second business day after surgery – during the first session, the primary goal should be pain and swelling control and beginning to work through the prescribed rehabilitation protocol.
- Your first physical therapy appointment will need to be scheduled prior to surgery. We will assist you to determine your physical therapy location and will fax the necessary paperwork to the therapy facility. You will also receive a copy.
- Physical Therapy is typically recommended 2-3 times per week for 3-4 months.

Follow-Up

- You will have a follow-up appointment at our office 10-14 days after surgery (staples will be removed at this time).

****You will need to take an oral antibiotic prior to any invasive dental or gastrointestinal procedures. Please notify our office where you would like the prescription called in, to be filled as needed, prior to these procedures. Please allow 24-48 hours for your prescription request to be processed.****