

## **Total Knee Replacement Post-Operative Instructions**

**Dr. Schoch**

### **General Instructions**

- No alcoholic beverages for 24 hours and/or while taking pain medications.
- Eat light after surgery: start with liquids such as soups, Jell-O, or 7-Up and progress to a normal diet if you are not nauseated.
- Keep the dressing clean and dry. You may shower and bathe only if water proof dressing remains intact.
- Elevate the operative extremity.
- No pillows under knee.
- Motion daily is important to prevent long term stiffness and arthrofibrosis that occurs within the first 12 weeks.
- Home PT/Health will assist with ambulation and progress you as tolerated. Use walker for assistance.
- If provided with sequential compression devices, wear them for the duration of time you are prescribed blood thinners. **Please wear sequential compression devices when sedentary for greater than one hour.**

### **Medications**

- Take pain medicine with food that was sent to pharmacy. If you have not picked this up then have a family member do so or present there immediately after discharge.
- You must take a blood thinner Aspirin 81 mg BID Enteric Coated Starting the day of surgery with first tolerated meal in recovery or at home. ( Some patient are given Eliquis that is taken twice a day instead of this or are already on blood thinners, if this is the case do not take the 81 mg BID RX).
- Take Antimicrobials if were sent to pharmacy. (This does not apply to all patients).
- Dosage: Take 1-2 tablets every 4-6 hours as needed for pain.
- Use any OTC laxative, stool softener, constipation is common post surgery. Do not use ExLax. Use Ducolax or Colace twice daily, Miralax as needed. Rectal suppository may be necessary in some cases. See below.
- Common we suggest drinking 8 12 ounce glasses of water a day and with two use Miralax for constipation.
- Contact office if trouble urinating or bowel movements, in some cases you may be required to go to hospital for treatment.

### **Post-Op Dressing/Bandage**

- Do not change the dressing unless otherwise instructed. Keep it clean and dry. Do not apply antibiotic ointment or other products to incision area. Dressing is waterproof. If

remaining intact and should remain until post-operative visit. Contact office if any problem with dressing remaining adhered to skin.

## **Ice**

- Use continuous ice unit as needed for pain and edema. Tens unit to be applied by home PT/Health. **Follow-up Appointment 2 weeks post-operative with Doctor Schoch or Physician Assistant - Anthony Brunetti PA-C.**
- An appointment should be made for you to be seen by 14 days post-operatively. Please call the office to set this up or if you have any questions regarding date/time.

## **Signs and Symptoms to Report**

- Fever greater than 101 degrees.
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing.
- Foul smelling drainage from the incision.
- If you experience out of control pain ie: pain that is not relieved with your prescription pain medications.

## **COMMON QUESTIONS AFTER TOTAL JOINT REPLACEMENT**

### **Do I have any RESTRICTIONS after my joint replacement?**

There are NO restrictions after partial knee replacement, total knee replacement. Use common sense, and do what seems safe for you. Do not place pillow under knee, place pillow under ankle. Activity as tolerated.

## **Pain Control**

Pain is highly variable after surgery. Some patients have little or no pain, some have severe pain. Most patients will take (narcotic) pain pills for 3-4 weeks with a total knee replacement.

Please remember that all narcotic pain pills are harmful to you. They cause bad side effects including nausea/vomiting, constipation, sleep disturbances, personality changes, etc. If you take them every four hours around the clock for more than a few days, they will be addicting and the pain control effect will be less. If you can wait longer between doses, you will get better pain relief and have less addiction potential. In fact, our patients who take the least narcotic pain

medication recover the fastest. **DO NOT TAKE ANY PAIN MEDICATION OTHER THAN WHAT WAS PRESCRIBED TO YOU. DO NOT COMBINE DUE TO ADDITIVE EFFECTS.**

Any time you are regularly taking pain pills, we recommend you take stool softeners (such as Colace twice daily). If you are constipated, consider a suppository, enema, or magnesium citrate (a very strong oral laxative). You can also consider increasing your fiber intake, drink more water, and walking can all help avoid this issue.

### **How do I care for my INCISION?**

All incisions are maintenance free. Incisions are covered with a waterproof dressing. Leave that in place until your post-operative visit. No stitches or staples are used on the skin.

**KNEE** surgeries will have a clear tape (**prineo**), which should stay on your incision for **TWO WEEKS** after surgery. Provider will simply pull the device off your skin, such as removing a band aid. Sutures are absorbable under the skin.

**If your incision itches or gets any redness please call the office to have the dressing changed.**

### **How often should I ICE & ELEVATE my leg?**

During the first two weeks, you should **ice** *as much as possible* to reduce pain and swelling. Always use a thin cloth in between the ice and your skin. If possible, elevate your leg above heart level while icing or laying down. After two weeks, icing is optional...do whatever feels best.

### **How long do I have to take BLOOD THINNING medications after surgery?**

Take a 81mg aspirin twice a day for three weeks after partial or total knee replacement, ***unless*** your physician has instructed you otherwise. Some high risk patients or patients that were previously anticoagulated will not take aspirin and will take their oral blood thinner. **DO NOT TAKE BOTH.**

### **When do I start outpatient PHYSICAL THERAPY?**

You will be given an outpatient therapy script at your first office visit after your surgery and you can pick a location of your choice. Continue PT with Home Health.

### **How soon can I SHOWER?**

After your pain pump is removed, you may shower. There is a waterproof dressing over your incision. Leave that in place until you see your doctor in the office.

### **How soon can I start to DRIVE?**

It is not legal to drive when you are taking pain medications. For a *Left* side surgery, you can drive when it is comfortable for you to get in and out of a car with ease and are able to stop the car in an emergency situation. *Right* side surgery can drive one month after surgery (this is a general rule, and does not apply to every patient).

### **How often do I wear compression STOCKINGS?**

Not all patients need them. If you are given them, wear them until your first office visit after your surgery. After that, they are optional. You can wear them as needed, for swelling only.

### **How long do I take the IRON supplement after surgery?**

Not all patients need iron. If you were given iron take it until you are done taking your blood thinning medication. Iron pills can cause constipation and/or nausea, if this side effect is severe, you can stop taking it at any time.

### **When can I resume taking my normal daily MEDICATIONS/VITAMINS after surgery?**

You can resume normal meds after surgery immediately as long as they do not have any blood thinning agents in them. Some rheumatoid medications can't be resumed for 3 weeks after surgery while the incision heals.

**How soon can I SWIM?**

Make sure your incision is completely clean and dry, with no openings or scabbing to your incision. This will take at least one month. This applies to going in hot tubs, pools, lakes, or oceans.

**How soon can I FLY?**

You should wait at least one month after your surgery before flying. Be sure to take an aspirin before your flight and remember to pump your feet and ankles while you are sitting in your seat. It would be good to get up and walk around every hour or so.

**When can I have DENTAL work done and do I need antibiotics?**

You should wait about 3 month after your surgery before any kind of dental work. You do not need antimicrobial treatment if you are a healthy adult prior to procedure unless ordered by your dentist.

**Do I need to take antibiotics prior to a colonoscopy?**

No. You do not have to take antibiotics prior to this procedure.

**Can I have a MRI scan after my total joint replacement?**

Yes. The implant is made of titanium, which is non-metallic.

**Is there a joint replacement card that I can get for going through metal detectors?**

Yes. You can get one of these anytime after your surgery from the office. The front desks at both offices have them for you. They have to be given to you in person and cannot be mailed to your home.

**What is the protocol for needing a refill or change of prescribed medications?**

Call the St. Clair Shores office at 586-773-1300 or the Macomb Twp. office at 586-416-1300 and hit the medication line prompt.

**This instruction sheet has been explained to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have received understandable answers to my questions. I understand these instructions and have received a copy for my use.**