

Total and Partial Knee Replacement Discharge Instructions

Dr. Kenneth Ierardi

Please review the following instructions following your knee replacement surgery. If you have any further questions or concerns please call the St Clair Orthopaedics office to get in touch with our team. If it is after hours you will be directed to the on call physician.

In the first 2 weeks after your knee replacement, it is normal to have more pain, redness, and swelling than were present before surgery. Please follow these instructions in order to limit these symptoms.

Ice: Apply ice to the joint and always keep a towel between the ice and your skin. Apply the ice for 30 minutes and then take a 30 minute break. I especially recommend applying ice after any physical activity or physical therapy sessions to decrease swelling and pain.

Elevation: When resting in bed or on the couch please always keep your leg elevated at the level of your waist or higher. I recommend **placing pillows underneath your heel** so that your knee remains straight. This helps to prevent you from losing range of motion as you are healing. Do not place pillows underneath your knee or keep your knee bent for long periods of time while resting. Using compression stockings on your legs can also help prevent swelling.

Diet: Resume your preoperative diet. **Increase your protein intake** and avoid sugary foods to help with healing. Iron supplementation can help prevent anemia after surgery. Be sure to drink plenty of fluids.

Dressings: You may remove the ACE bandage wrap the day after surgery. I do recommend keeping this on when resting afterwards as it adds some compression to your leg to help prevent swelling. Please **DO NOT REMOVE THE BANDAGE OVER YOUR INCISION UNTIL YOU RETURN FOR YOUR FOLLOW UP APPOINTMENT.** If you encounter any excess drainage from the dressing that is soaking through please contact Dr. Ierardi by calling the office. You may shower with the dressing in place. You may allow the water from the shower to run over the dressing. Please do not aggressively scrub around the dressing. Do not take a bath or go into a pool or hot tub with your leg until after your 6 week post operative appointment. Do not apply any cream or lotion to the site unless directed to do so by Dr. Ierardi.

Assistive Devices: You will likely use a walker for the first weeks after surgery. As you progress your activity and balance you can transition to a cane and then to no assistive device. Please follow your physical therapist's recommendation for this.

Activity: The first 7 – 10 days after surgery you should focus on decreasing swelling with ice and elevation. Take short walks of 50 ft every couple of hours. Please **do not**

walk long distances during the first week after surgery. Please avoid any high impact activity like running, jumping, or pivoting until 3 months after surgery. You will start physical therapy during the second week after your surgery. Perform stretching and strengthening exercises every hour while awake. **Please follow the protocol found here:** <https://hipkneeinfo.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/knee-exercises-print-guide.pdf> . This also provides in detail videos of exercises and stretches to follow.

Medications: Please take as prescribed. These medications work together in order to help decrease your pain and inflammation after surgery, decrease your risk of infection, and prevent you from getting blood clots.

- Tylenol: take this on a scheduled basis every 8 hours to keep your baseline pain controlled
- Celebrex/Meloxicam: take this on a scheduled basis in order to decrease inflammation
- Tranexemic acid: take this medication for the first 4 days after surgery as scheduled. This is used to decrease bleeding and inflammation.
- Flexeril: take this as needed for muscle spasms
- Oxycodone: take this only as needed for severe pain
- Senna: take this on a scheduled basis in order to prevent constipation. If you experience constipation please try taking over the counter miralax, milk of magnesia, or a fleet enema in addition to the senna 5-7 days after surgery.
- Aspirin/Eliquis: take this as prescribed starting the day after surgery to prevent blood clots. You will take this for 35 days.
- If you have a higher risk of infection you will also be given an antibiotic to take for 7 days. Please take this as scheduled.

For pain medication refills please call the office to have them sent to your pharmacy. We are unable to refill medications on the weekend so if you are going to run out of pills please contact the office on the Friday before.

Sleeping: Everyone has a different position of sleep which is comfortable. You do not have any restrictions with your knee in regards to sleeping. Do what is comfortable for you. Do not place pillows under your knee. This will cause your knee to get stiff. I do recommend placing the pillow between your legs when sleeping on your side for added comfort. If you have difficulty sleeping try taking an over the counter Benadryl 25mg prior to bed time. Taking a dose of oxycodone or Flexeril can also be helpful but do not take these at the same time.

Numbness: Having numbness around your incision after surgery is normal and will improve over the first year following your surgery.

Clicking: Hearing a clicking noise after knee replacement is normal. This is simply the metal and plastic hitting against each other as you are moving. This will diminish as you do physical therapy and gain your strength back.

Driving: Returning to driving depends on a few factors. You must not be taking opioid pain medications any longer in order to drive. If your surgery was on the left side you can likely return to driving more quickly than if it was on the right side. The biggest concern is being able to operate the vehicle safely and having appropriate reaction time back in your leg to do this. This typically takes 2-6 weeks.

Work: Returning to work is dependent on your occupation. More physical labor jobs that require extended periods of standing will likely take 3 months to return to. We will often have you ease back into these jobs with decreased hours or office only activities at first. More sedentary jobs and office work can often be returned to earlier. We will provide you with any documentation that is needed to be off of work and will monitor your progress during follow up appointments to determine the best time for you to return.

Follow up: You will follow up with Dr. Ierardi and his team 2 weeks after surgery for your first appointment. This should be scheduled for you already. If it has not please contact the office to make this appointment.

Important Phone Numbers

St Clair Orthopaedics and Sports Medicine Office

- **Hours: Monday – Friday 7AM – 4PM**
- **If calling after hours the office phone number will direct you to the on call doctor**
- **Macomb Township Office: (586) 416 – 1300**
- **St Clair Shores Office: (586) 773 – 1300**
- **Precision Surgery Center: (586) 816 – 9900**
- **Paige Ambrow (Dr. Ierardi's Surgical Scheduler): (586) 416 – 4266**

If you have a true medical emergency please call 911 and go to the emergency room