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Sports Medicine and Shoulder Specialist

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POST-OPERATIVE EDUCATION: KNEE CARTILAGE PROCEDURE

WEIGHT BEARING & BRACE: Additional information is dependent on the procedure performed:

Microfracture, MACI, DeNovo Cartilage Graft or other Cartilage Procedure: A brace will be dispensed to you to wear after surgery. This needs to be worn at all times, and must be locked EVERY TIME you walk for 6 weeks. You may NOT put your weight on your operative leg. This means you MUST use crutches or a walker EVERY TIME you walk for 6 weeks. We DO want you to be up and around at home as much as possible after surgery.

Ligament Reconstruction: If you have had procedure(s) performed in addition to those listed above, you will defer to the above restrictions unless specifically instructed by your surgeon.

MOVING YOUR KNEE:

It is OK for you to start bending your knee right away (unless otherwise directed by your surgeon). When you are SEATED and awake, you may unlock the brace and passively (under power of your arms) bend slightly at the knee. You may be asked to use a CPM (continuous passive motion machine) for 6 hours per day (nighttime use OK). Please advance motion on the CPM according to protocol or according to your surgeon's recommendations. You should also elevate your foot at least 30 minutes four times a day to your heart level or above to help reduce swelling.

LEG EXERCISES:

You may start doing straight leg lifts right away (unless otherwise directed by your surgeon). While lying in bed, simply keep your leg straight and lift it off the bed. Hold it up for a count of 5. Do this 10 times, and repeat three times a day. It will be difficult at first, but don't give up, simply flexing your quad muscle without lifting your leg is helping make your leg stronger. You should do ankle pumps throughout the day to help reduce swelling and prevent a blood clot. Instructions regarding physical therapy will be given after surgery and at follow up appointments.

ICE:

Please note that with the dressings placed during surgery, you may notice decreased benefit from the ice. Use as needed and if you notice benefit. Ice is most helpful in the first 3 days after surgery, but can help up to 2 weeks after surgery. We do not recommend that you use heat, as this can increase swelling.

If you chose to purchase a commercial ice machine, please use it according to manufacturer's recommendations. If you chose not to purchase an ice machine, you may use a commercially available ice bag or fill a large plastic bag with ice and water. (Do not place a plastic bag directly on your skin, but place a towel on your knee in between your skin and the ice bag.) You can ice your knee 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off throughout the day. Do not ice an area longer than 30 minutes at a time, as this can cause frost bite.

BANDAGES:

You may remove your bandages and shower three days after surgery. If you have white Steri Strips, DO NOT remove them. It is OK to get your incisions wet after the bandage is removed, but it is very important not to soak the incision underwater (no bath, pool, hot tub etc...) for 3 weeks. It is OK to wash the incisions gently with soap and gently pat dry with a towel. Do not place any lotion or other ointment on your incisions. You may cover them with Band-Aids for comfort if they catch on your clothing. An ACE bandage worn on the knee for the first 2 weeks will help control swelling.

MEDICATIONS:

Narcotic pain medicine (such as Percocet – oxycodone, Norco – hydrocodone, or Tylenol#3 - Codeine): We will prescribe a different medication if you cannot take these. Take this AS NEEDED only. Do not take additional Tylenol (also called acetaminophen) with these medicines if they already have Tylenol in them. You may SUBSTITUTE Tylenol for a narcotic pill if you choose to. Be certain that you do not exceed the maximum Tylenol dose as noted on the Tylenol bottle.

Stool softener: Pain medicines often cause constipation. It is best to take this medicine when you start taking narcotics and before you have a problem.

Blood Thinner: You will be prescribed a blood thinner (Ecotrin – stomach-protective aspirin, Lovenox – by injection, or Eliquis) to be taken for prevention of blood clots. These will be used for 2-6 weeks.

Zofran (ondansetron): You may take this medication if you are having nausea or vomiting.

Robaxin (methocarbamol): You may take this muscle relaxer if you are having spasms after surgery.

Omegapure, Synovx, Xcellent C: These medications aide in joint and cartilage health and recovery. Please refer to your surgeon's recommendations for pharmacy locations.

***Please do NOT take NSAIDs such as Ibuprofen (Advil) or Motrin, as these may slow healing.*

You may also use SCDs (sequential compression devices) following surgery. These squeeze your legs, and are further protection against blood clots.

FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENTS:

You should have a **follow-up appointment** with your surgeon about 2 weeks after surgery. If you did not stay overnight in the hospital, you will also have a visit with the Physician's Assistant within a few days of your surgery. Call (480) 964-2908 right away if you do not have an appointment already scheduled. We will check your incisions and remove any sutures at the 2-week visit. We will also answer any specific questions you may have about your surgery. You will be referred for Physical Therapy if this has not been arranged, as PT is very important after knee surgery.

CALL OUR OFFICE at (480) 964-2908 with any urgent or emergent questions or concerns that you may have, or if you develop swelling in your leg with calf pain, swelling that will not go away when you elevate your leg, a temperature above 101.4, or drainage from your incisions.

If you experience any of these symptoms: go to an **Emergency Department** close to your house: High fever (above 102.5), chest pain, difficulty breathing, fainting, or bleeding.