

POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS KNEE MULTI LIGAMENT RECONSTRUCTION

MEDICATION

- One of two pain medications, Norco (hydrocodone), or Percocet (oxycodone) will be prescribed to you. Take as instructed and as needed.
 - Pain medication may cause constipation. You may take an over the counter stool softener (Colace, Senekot, etc) to help prevent this problem.
 - You should take these medicines with food or they may nauseate you.
 - You may not drive or operate heavy equipment while on narcotics
 - Pain medication is refilled on an individual basis and only during office hours.
- If you have a nerve block, begin taking the pills as you feel your sensation returning to prevent a sudden onset of extreme pain (typically 10-12 hours after your surgery). **DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE BLOCK COMPLETELY WEARS OFF.**
 - Most patients find it helpful to take two pills 10-12 hours after surgery and another two every four hours the first night after surgery, decreasing the amount as you feel the pain improving.
 - The first 48 hours are typically the worst for pain and gradually improves.
- If prescribed Lovenox or Xarelto for prevention of blood clots, begin the day AFTER surgery and finish all injections or pills.
- Take one regular aspirin (325 mg) once a day for 30 days unless you have been prescribed Xarelto, Lovenox, are on another blood thinner, or have a history of stomach ulcers.
- **Resume all home medications unless otherwise instructed.**
- Call immediately to the office (314-336-2555) if you are having an adverse reaction to the medicine.

WOUND CARE

- Do not remove or unwrap your dressings. This is to help keep the wounds clean and decrease the chance of infection.
- Dressings will be changed on your first post-operative visit and a new dressing applied. If they get EXCESSIVELY wet prior to this, meaning “soaked through,” contact the office.
- Until your first post-op visit, wrap the leg, **WITH BRACE**, in a large plastic garbage bag with tape at both ends to shower or bathe.
 - Dr. Grimshaw will instruct you when you may shower without the brace on.

- Continue to use the bag, plastic wrap or waterproof bandages to keep incisions dry until instructed by Dr. Grimshaw.
- NO submersion of wounds (bath, hot tub, pool) is allowed until a minimum of 3 weeks after surgery.

CRUTCHES

- You will need to keep all weight off of your leg for 6-8 weeks or until instructed otherwise.
- Crutches will be needed until physical therapy and Dr. Grimshaw deem them unnecessary based on strength in the involved leg and you can walk with a **normal gait (heel to toe walking)**.

BRACE

- The post-operative brace, locked in full extension, is to be worn at all times.
- It is necessary for even the simplest tasks such as going to the restroom to protect your knee while your muscles are weak.
- Dr. Grimshaw will instruct you when to open the brace and discontinue the brace.

EXERCISE

- Following surgery three main goals exist:
 - Full knee extension
 - Quadriceps contraction and activation
 - Control of pain and swelling.
- It is important to avoid any hamstring contractions for the first two months after surgery. This will help to protect your PCL and lateral reconstructions.
- DO NOT put pillows under the knee while sleeping to help the knee from getting stiff.
- Elevate your leg for several days if you are sitting to help with swelling.

SLEEP

- Nighttime will probably be the most uncomfortable time.
- You should sleep in your post-op brace.
- You may slightly loosen the straps to aid in sleeping if you feel they are tight.

COLD THERAPY

- Ice should be used for comfort and swelling. Use it at least 20 minutes at a time. Many patients use it an hour on then an hour off while awake for the first day or two.
- **Never apply directly to exposed skin. Place a dish-towel or t-shirt between your skin and the ice.**
- After the two days, use 20-30 minutes every 3-4 hours if possible.
A simple bag of frozen peas may be used as an inexpensive ice pack. Buy several bags of peas, place in a gallon size zip-lock bag making them about an inch thick and removing as much air as possible. Return to freezer, lying flat when done.

BRUISING

- The lower leg may become swollen and bruised, which is normal. This is from the fluid and blood moving down the leg and should resolve in 10-14 days.
- **If you experience severe calf pain and swelling, call the office immediately.**

EMERGENCIES

- If you have an emergency contact Dr. Grimshaw's office.
- Contact the office if you notice any of the following:
 - Uncontrolled nausea or vomiting, reaction to medication, inability to urinate, fever greater than 101.5 (low grade fevers 1-2 days after surgery is normal), severe pain not relieved by pain medication, redness or continued drainage around incisions (a small amount is normal), calf pain or severe swelling.
- **If you are having chest pain or difficulty breathing, call 911 or go to the closest emergency room.**

DENTAL WORK

- If you need dental work within six weeks after surgery please contact the office for instructions.

FOLLOW UP APPOINTMENT

- Please make your first post-op visit 5-7 after surgery if not done so already.
- **If you have any questions, please call 314-336-2555.**