

What to Expect after Uni/Total Knee Arthroplasty

1. **You will stay in the hospital/care suite 1 night**
2. **You are up and walking the day of surgery**
 - a. Cane or walker for support (you can either purchase these or borrow from someone you know)
3. **Physical therapy (PT)** should be done 2 times a week for at least 4 weeks and then down to 1 time a week until all goals are met
 - a. PT should start the 5-7 days after surgery
 - b. The main goal is to focus on getting motion (flexion and extension) back as well as decreasing swelling and pain management
4. **The first 6 weeks after surgery are the most challenging**
 - a. **There will be a lot of swelling (usually an increase 3-5 days post op)– above and below the knee**
 - i. Elevate leg above your heart
 - ii. Ice at least 5-6 times a day (20 minutes on 1 hour off)
 - iii. Compression – use stockings, ace wrap or compression sleeve
 - iv. Ankle pumps (while leg is elevated, repeatedly point and flex foot)
 1. Pushes swelling out of leg and back into the lymph system
 - v. Swelling will come and go through out recovery
 - b. **There will be pain (usually an increase 3-4 days post op)**
 - i. Acetaminophen and ibuprofen (if able to take NSAIDS) can be used in addition to the narcotic medication to help with post-surgical pain
 - ii. read through pain management handout
 - iii. ***This is part of the healing process**
 - c. **Range of motion will be limited** – due to pain and swelling
 - i. You have to push through this to get motion back
5. **Common post surgical symptoms**
 - a. Bruising above and below knee (entire leg may bruise)
 - b. **Dressing may have signs of drainage post-surgical, this is normal and expected– unless it is continually expanding to the point of seeping out of the bandage, there is no need for concern. – Bandage can be removed 7-10 days after surgery**
 - c. **Warmth to the touch** - this is normal, but pay attention for symptoms of infection
 - i. Symptoms of possible infections
 1. Fever
 2. Drainage
 3. Increase in pain – different then surgical pain
 4. Red streaks or increase in redness
 5. Unexplained loss of range of motion or the inability to walk

- d. Swelling – usually increases 3-4 days following surgery**
- e. Numbness
- f. Stiffness
- g. Trouble sleeping at night –**
 - i. Medications to try: melatonin, Tylenol/Advil pm**
- 6. You will be on an anticoagulant medication for up to 4 weeks**
 - a. Aspirin 81mg 2x/day
 - b. Coumadin as directed (if you are at risk for a blood clot)
- 7. You will be prescribed pain medications (make sure to take stool softener while using the narcotic medications)**
 - a. There will be limited refills of the narcotic medications**
 - b. Read through prescription protocol
 - c. Narcotic medications are used to help manage post-surgical pain, not to make it go away completely**
 - d. Acetaminophen and ibuprofen (if able to take NSAIDS) can be used in addition to the narcotic medication to help with post-surgical pain**
- 8. Showering:**
 - a. 3 days after surgery
 - b. Do not scrub
 - c. Keep bandage on until post op appointment
 - d. Pat dry
- 9. Wound management:**
 - a. Will be checked at first post op visit
- 10. Driving depends on the following:**
 - a. Which knee the surgery was on
 - b. Must be off narcotic medication during the day
 - c. Must be able to slam on the brakes
 - d. If you feel you are ready, practice in a parking lot before you go on the roads

***Dental Visits:** No dental appointments for 3 months following a total knee.

Following your total knee, you will need to be on an antibiotic prior to going to the dentist for 2 years. Call our office at 651-351-2618 to get the prescription.

***If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Sarah S at 651-351-2618.**