



Quick Reference Post-Operative Instructions for Total Knee Replacement

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You will have a short stay in the hospital. For most people this will be one overnight stay. If you have complex medical issues you may stay longer.

PAIN

- The day of surgery you will be receiving a spinal nerve block, this block can last 12-18 hours after surgery (your leg may feel numb for this time)
- Although you may not have much pain while the block is still working we recommend taking your prescribed pain medication before the block wears off. Plan to take the pain medication regularly the first 3-5 days to stay ahead of the pain.
- You will have received medicine that will make you sleepy. This will affect your ability to think clearly and make good decisions. You will need a responsible adult to drive you home and stay with you for at least 24 hours after your hospital stay. Do not drive, use machinery, or make important decisions while on pain medications. Do not drink alcohol while on pain medications.
- If you are having trouble sleeping try taking over the counter Benadryl before bed.
- Consider taking an over the counter stool softener while on narcotic medication. As well as eat plenty of fiber and drink plenty of water.

WOUND CARE

Do not shower or bathe for the first 48 hours after surgery. After 48 hours, it is ok to shower.

- Please leave your dressing/bandages on for the first 48 hours
- You will have an Aquacel (water resistant dressing) over your incision. You may shower with this dressing. Leave the dressing in place until your first post-operative visit (about 7 days after surgery).

After your first post-operative visit:

- Your Aquacel dressing will be removed at your first post-operative visit. After this dressing is removed, you may shower with your incision uncovered. You will likely have surgical staples that will remain in place until two weeks post-operatively. Try to avoid spraying water directly over the incision/staples. Pat to dry.
- If you note any drainage from your incision after the Aquacel dressing is removed, cover with fresh dressings daily until no longer draining. This should not last more than a couple of days. If the wound site is dry you can leave it open to air.

- Do not submerge the shoulder in any type of water (bath, hot tub, pool, etc.) for at least 4-6 weeks
- Do not apply any lotions or ointments to the wound site until permission from the doctor. This will be at least until your first post-operative visit.

At your 2-week post op visit you will have x-rays taken and your staples removed.

- If you need to schedule a 1 or 2-week post-op visit please **call Darcy at 651-351-2671**

ICE & ELEVATE

- Ice is good for both pain control and to help with swelling
- Ice for 20 mins at least 3 times per day (more if necessary or if you are able)
- Do not go to sleep with ice on your knee, this can damage your skin
- Elevate your leg above heart level as needed to reduce swelling in your knee and lower leg
 - It is not uncommon to have swelling in your ankle or lower leg, especially if you are up walking around or standing for an extended period of time

WEIGHT BEARING

- You may put weight through the knee as pain allows. It will be sore, but it is not causing any physical damage to your knee.

PHYSICAL THERAPY

- Home exercises after surgery:
 - Any exercises prescribed by inpatient physical therapy (while you are in the hospital)
- You should begin outpatient physical therapy within 3-5 days of hospital discharge
 - We will give you a prescription to start outpatient physical therapy before you leave the hospital.
- Feel free to call the physical therapy office to make appointments right after you leave the hospital. Physical Therapy scheduling for Stillwater and Woodbury 651-351-2602.
- The first 4-6 weeks after surgery, therapy will focus mostly on range of motion. Strength will come later with use.

WHEN SHOULD YOU BE CONCERNED?

- Temperature above 101.6. It is normal to have a mild temperature a day or two after surgery. Make sure you are taking deep breaths to fill your lungs all the way.
 - Signs of infection- increasing pain, increasing swelling, redness, unpleasant odor, increased warmth, or green or yellow drainage.
 - If you have severe symptoms, such as:
 - Chest pain
 - Difficulty breathing
 - Weakness or inability to move the arms and legs as usual
 - Severe headache
 - New confusion
 - Loss of bowel or bladder function
- CALL 911 or go to an emergency department at a nearby hospital**
- If you feel it is not urgent **contact our office at 651-351-2671**. You will likely have to leave a message and your call will be returned. We try to return all calls quickly, but it may be a few hours or the next day.