

## **What to Expect After Uni/Total Knee Arthroplasty**

**Andrea Saterbak, MD**

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 5 weeks and then down to 1 time a week until all goals are met**
  - a. 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. read through pain management handout
    - ii. \*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.**
  - 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/Aleve**

**6. You will be on an anticoagulant medication for 6 weeks**

a. Aspirin 81mg 2/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**

**8. Showering:**

a. 3 days after surgery

b. Let water run over incision

c. Do not scrub

d. Do not remove steri strips

e. Pat dry

f. Cover as needed

**9. Wound management:**

a. Keep steri strips on

b. Keep covered with non-adherent gauze

c. 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 knee replacement. Following your knee replacement, 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, contact Nick T at 651-351-2618**