

Knee Surgery General Postoperative Instructions

Activities: Following surgery, patients will generally require crutches or a walker. How long you will be using crutches will depend on the procedure and physical therapy (PT) protocol. Your PT Protocol will be provided to you, but is also listed on Dr. LaPrade's website:

<https://tcomn.com/physicians/christopher-laprade/>. We recommend seeing a PT within 1-2 days after any knee surgery (besides a quadriceps reconstruction, patellar tendon reconstruction or patellar ORIF) to begin working on motion and decreasing inflammation.

You will be non-weightbearing for any fracture fixation around the knee, osteotomy, unstable meniscal repair, or multiligamentous knee injury. A meniscectomy, MPFL reconstruction, and some ACL reconstructions may allow you to put weight on your leg with crutches/walker immediately after surgery.

Pain Control: Dr. LaPrade recommends a nerve block for most patients undergoing knee surgery as this is by the far the most effective short-term option for pain relief. The length of this nerve block will vary based on the location and type of medication. It is not uncommon for patients to feel great after surgery until the nerve block wears off and then have increased pain if they have not been taking any medication.

Dr. LaPrade also recommends ice for help with pain and inflammation. Unfortunately, you will not get much benefit from the ice if you have a splint in place. While you are resting, you can use a Nice Machine, Game Ready or place cold ice packs for 15-20 minutes at a time. Place a clean, dry towel or pillowcase between your skin and the cold pack. Your preoperative surgical packet contains information regarding how to obtain a Nice machine.

Dr. LaPrade recommends scheduling your medications (especially the Tylenol and Ibuprofen) to take them regularly the first couple of days after surgery to not fall behind on pain control.

Postop Medication Regimen:

- Anticoagulant/Blood Thinner (usually Aspirin or Lovenox)
 - This is meant to help prevent blood clots
 - The exact blood thinner will depend on the surgery
 - If you are already on a blood thinner, please resume the medication the day after surgery and do NOT take this additional blood thinner
- Tylenol 1000 mg every 8 hours
 - Highly recommend continuing this for the first couple weeks after surgery as it can be quite effective as a baseline pain medication
- Ibuprofen

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- Please do not take if you have history of kidney disease, stomach ulcers, or GI bleeds
- Oxycodone 5 mg tablets, which you can take up to 2 pills every 4 hours
 - This medication is absolutely not required, and every effort should be taken to try and be off this medication by 2 weeks after surgery. We will generally not provide any additional pain medications after 1 month from surgery.
 - These medications will not be filled after-hours or on weekends per TCO policy so please anticipate a need to contact the office for a refill ahead of time
- Over-the-counter stool softener, such as Miralax or Colace
 - Narcotic pain medications are known to cause constipation, and Dr. LaPrade recommends taking one of these medications daily while on the narcotic
- Zofran
 - Narcotic pain medications may also cause nausea, and Zofran will be provided to be taken only as needed
- All other home medications can be resumed the day after surgery unless otherwise stated

Dressing: It is normal to see some staining on your dressings after surgery, especially for an arthroscopy. Please alert our office if the dressing is completely saturated or leaking. If you are unsure which of the following categories applies to you, please ask!

- For an **all-arthroscopic procedure** (such as a meniscectomy or meniscus repair): Please keep the dressing completely clean and dry for 72 hours after surgery. You can shower immediately if using a shower bag to keep the dressing completely dry. After 72 hours, you can remove the outer dressing and shower without needing a shower bag. Please leave the sutures or steri-strips in place. Dr. LaPrade recommends patting the portal sites dry after the shower and putting clean band-aids on each site. Do not take a bath or submerge the wound for 4 weeks after surgery (assuming the incisions are all healed).
- For a **combined arthroscopic and open procedure** (such as an ACL reconstruction or MPFL reconstruction): Please keep your outer bulky dressing in place until your first PT visit where your PT can assist with a dressing change. You can shower immediately if using a shower bag to keep the dressing completely dry. After 72 hours, you can remove the outer dressing but would keep any deeper dressings or steri-strips in place until your first postoperative appointment. The deeper dressings are waterproof and you can shower immediately after surgery avoiding direct water on the dressing. There may also be either surgical glue or steri-strips beneath the bulky dressing, and please



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leave these in place. There may also be clear sutures at the ends of the incisions that we will cut at the first postop visit. You will also have small portal sites, and Dr. LaPrade recommends patting the portal sites dry after the shower and putting clean band-aids on each site. Do not take a bath or submerge the wound for at least 4 weeks after surgery (assuming the incisions are all healed).

- **For a completely open procedure** (such as a cartilage procedure or tibial plateau fracture): Please keep your outer bulky dressing in place until your first PT visit where your PT can assist with a dressing change. There will be either surgical glue or steri-strips beneath the dressing, and please leave these in place. There may also be clear sutures at the ends of the incisions that we will cut at the first postop visit. Do not take a bath or submerge the wound for 4 weeks after surgery (assuming the incisions are all healed).

Diet: Dr. LaPrade does not have any restrictions on diet after surgery but recommends a light meal the first night after surgery given the possibility of nausea after anesthesia.

Follow-Up: Typically, you will have a postoperative appointment about 2 weeks after surgery. This will be scheduled before surgery in most cases and can be done in Eagan, Edina, or Eden Prairie.

Questions or Concerns: Please reach out to Dr. LaPrade's office at 952-808-3090 or juliawareham@tcomn.com (Dr. LaPrade's care coordinator) if there are any postoperative concerns. Dr. LaPrade or Grace will reach out as soon as possible to address any questions. This may include issues with pain control, the surgical wound, fevers or chills, concern for leg swelling/DVT (blood clot), shortness of breath, or others. We will make every effort to respond within 24 hours during the week.

TCO also has an urgent care open at 12 different locations from 8 am-8 pm including weekends, and this provides you the chance to see an orthopaedic provider if an in-person visit is needed. If there is an urgent postoperative question after 5 pm or on weekends, there are other providers available for telephone support at 952-808-3000. We recommend trying any of these routes above over an emergency room if the issue is not a true emergency.