

Care After Knee Arthroscopy

This Health Fact will tell you how to care for yourself at home after knee arthroscopy.

Activity

Keep the leg raised as much as you can for 48 hours to reduce swelling. If you are lying down, rest the leg on 2 or more pillows. Use the pillow to support the length of the lower leg, keeping the knee straight. Do not let the leg hang down.

You will have a TED stocking or an ACE wrap over incisions. You can remove the ACE or TED on this leg in 48 hours (2 days) after surgery. You can shower after that.

A TED stocking will also be placed on your other leg. You can remove this stocking 24 hours after surgery when you are up with your crutches.

Slowly increase the amount of weight you put on the leg, (unless your doctor has given you other instructions). Slowly return to your normal activity level. Use crutches until you can walk comfortably.

You should begin the home exercise program in **24 hours**.

You will discuss physical therapy for after surgery during your pre-op clinic visit. If your meniscus is stitched (repaired) you will be locked in a brace using crutches for up to 4-6 weeks after surgery. Your doctor will discuss this with you.

Pain

You may use ice to lessen the pain and swelling. Put an ice pack on the knee for 20 minutes. After 20 minutes take the ice off. You can put the ice on again after 1 hour.

Pain Medicine

You may be given pain medicine after surgery. You may also be given an anti-inflammatory to reduce swelling and pain. Take the medicine as instructed. If you have problems with the medicine, call the clinic.

Do not drink alcohol or drive while on opioid pain medicines.

Incision Care

- **Do not** soak your knee in any standing water (hot tub, pool, bathtub, lake) until your incisions are completely healed and no scab remains. This takes at least 4 weeks.
- Change the Band-Aids[®] daily. Use the Ace wrap or TED stocking for comfort and swelling if needed until your follow-up visit or until told otherwise.
- If you have steri-strips (thin white tapes) instead of stitches, leave them in place until they fall off in about 7-10 days.

Bathing

After 2 days, you may remove all the dressings and shower. **Follow your clinician's instructions for bathing.** Some clinicians will require patients to cover the incisions for bathing.

If you were told to wrap your incisions for bathing, cover the incision with a plastic wrap such as Glad Press n Seal or a plastic bag with the edges taped down. **Do not let the water run under the plastic wrap or bag. Continue to keep your incision's dry until your follow up appointment; you will receive further instruction at that time.**

If you were not told to cover your incisions, you may shower with no plastic wrap, and allow the incisions to get wet.

Follow-Up Care

You will be scheduled for a follow-up clinic visit with your doctor. Please call if you have any questions or concerns.

When to Call

Call if you have any of the symptoms listed below.

- Red, hot incision
- Foul smelling drainage from incision
- Fever above 100.4° F for readings taken 4 hours apart
- Bleeding which increases over an hour's time
- Calf tenderness or swelling, or a warm, reddened area noted in the calf of either leg

Who to Call

Sports Medicine Clinic
Monday-Friday, 8am-5pm
608-263-8850

After hours call the clinic number and your call will forward to the paging operator. Ask for the orthopedic resident on call. Leave your name and phone number. The doctor will call you back.

The toll-free number is **1-844-607-4800**.

If you are a patient receiving care at UnityPoint – Meriter, Swedish American or a health system outside of UW Health, please use the phone numbers provided in your discharge instructions for any questions or concerns.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright ©11/2021. University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#4262