



TOTAL KNEE ARTHROPLASTY DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS

WOUND CARE

Your surgical incision is covered with an Aquacel dressing. The Aquacel should remain in place until your surgery follow-up. Do not remove the Aquacel or allow anyone else to remove it including your home health nurse or physical therapist. It is very absorbent and should hold a significant amount of drainage. The center of the Aquacel may turn dark and protrude but this is to be expected and should not cause concern. If it begins leaking, first reinforce the Aquacel with tape or apply additional gauze. If this does not control the drainage, contact our office. You need to contact our office if you notice any redness around the outside borders of the dressing as well. You may shower but do not allow the showerhead to directly hit the Aquacel. Do not get in the tub or submerge the dressing. A certain degree of swelling in the operative leg is to be expected even down into your foot and toes. You may apply an ice pack to your knee. It can be used up to three times a day for no longer than 15 minutes at a time. Bruising of the thigh and calf can also occur. You may have numbness around the dressing which is to be expected as well.

ACTIVITY

Your new knee is ready to hold your weight immediately. Use your walker or cane as needed when walking. You will be provided with a Zero Knee (foam ankle support) while at the surgical facility. It is to be used for the first several weeks following surgery to encourage your leg to remain out straight while at rest. You will need to refrain from driving until your surgery followup at least and then once you become independent of your walker.

EXERCISE

You will want to begin performing your straight leg raises to strengthen your quad muscle as taught to you by the therapist in the surgical facility. You will also continue with the ankle pumps. You should begin formal physical therapy within a few days following your surgery in an outpatient therapy center. Home health therapy is also an option but outpatient therapy is preferred. Work hard on strengthening your quad muscle (thigh muscle) as this is an important aspect of your rehab. You can work on bending your knee but be gentle with this. Being able to fully straighten your knee and regaining excellent quad strength, tone and function is the most important objective in the weeks following TKA.

MEDICATIONS

You have been provided with prescriptions for your pain medication along with a blood thinner (Aspirin, Coumadin, or Injectables). Specific instructions for each of these will be on your prescription bottle. Please take the medications only as prescribed. Your pain medications are narcotics and

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TOTAL HIP ARTHROPLASTY DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS

MEDICATIONS (CONTINUED)

commonly cause constipation, nausea, and insomnia. Please make sure to eat prior to taking the medications and drink plenty of water along with a high fiber diet. You also need to be up and walking to help move your bowels as well. Contact our office with any further questions or issues. Ultimately, the less narcotic medication you take, the better you will feel. You cannot expect to be pain free. The narcotic pain medication should be used to help limit the severity of your pain.

RETURNING TO WORK

Depending upon the demands of your job, you may be out of work anywhere from 8-12 weeks. Each patient recovers differently and may require more or less time out of work. Typically, for sedentary work you can return within 6 weeks while the more physically demanding job can take 3-4 months before returning. This will be discussed again at your first surgery follow-up.

SURGERY FOLLOW-UP

You have been scheduled for a surgery follow-up approximately 2 weeks after your surgery. At this appointment you will have your Aquacel removed and a followup xray will be taken. Your physician will assess your incision and speak with you concerning your post-op recovery. He will also evaluate your walking ability and the ability for you to complete straighten your leg and go over any questions or concerns that you may have.

DIET

We ask that you continue a healthy, well-balanced diet following surgery to ensure proper wound healing. Drink plenty of fluids and eat a high fiber, high protein, low carb diet as previously discussed prior to your surgery. For the diabetic patient, continue to take excellent care of your blood sugars and keep them at 120 or less daily by following the proper diet and taking your diabetic medications as prescribed.

CALL THE DOCTOR:

If you experience any of the following, contact us:

- Fever of 100.4 or greater
- Excessive drainage outside of the Aquacel
- Shortness of Breath
- Chest Pain
- Redness outside the borders of the Aquacel