

# Knee Arthroscopy



## Instructions For Patients Going Home

UHN

**You have had a general anesthetic. Do not drive a car or drink alcohol for 24 hours.**

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### **Knee Arthroscopy:**

A knee arthroscopy is an operation that lets your surgeon look inside your knee joint and maybe repair the problem found during the operation. The operation is done with scopes through three small incisions (cuts) in the area of the knee.

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## What can you eat and drink after your operation?

You can go back to eating and drinking what you normally would right away.

## How much activity is safe?

- Go home and rest today.
- When sitting or lying down, raise your leg on 1 or 2 pillows. This will help prevent swelling. Do not place the pillows directly under your operated knee; place them under your calf and foot.
- Do not cross your legs.
- It is important to walk. Start by taking short walks around the house and then increase your activities and walking as tolerated.
- You may be up walking with full weight on both legs (unless specific instructions have been given to you by your surgeon).
- **You do not need crutches** when walking around unless your surgeon has told you to use them.
- Do not stand for long periods of time.
- If your surgeon has told you to use crutches, use them as instructed and follow the "How to Use Crutches" pamphlet if you have never used crutches before.
- Begin the exercises the day after your surgery. These exercises are included at the back of this pamphlet. Follow the exercises as noted.
- Your surgeon will provide you with the requisition for physiotherapy if required.
- Arrange this at an outpatient centre close to your home or work.
- Do not do any strenuous activities, like jogging, cycling, swimming or aerobics until advised by your surgeon.
- Your surgeon will tell you when it is safe for you to return to work, sport and drive a vehicle.

## How to take care of your wounds

- Keep your tensor/dressings clean and dry at all times and remove only as instructed below.
- Remove your tensor/dressing \_\_\_\_\_ days after your operation.
- Do not put the dressings back on, but apply clean band-aids to the wounds.
- Keep the wounds covered with clean band-aids until seen by your surgeon.
- If you have steri-strips (white strips), leave them in place until you see your surgeon. If they begin to fall off earlier, remove them and throw them away.
- Your sutures will be removed on your next follow-up appointment.
- Re-apply the tensor wrap. The wrap is to be applied in a circular motion, starting from the middle of your calf up to the middle of your thigh. Apply with **light** tension. Do not apply too tight because this can effect the blood circulation of your foot.



- The tensor wrap must be worn everyday until you see your surgeon. You may remove it from time to time as needed.
- Apply ice compresses to your knee for 15-20 minutes. Do this 5 to 6 times during the day for the first 2 to 3 days after your operation. Use ice packs, frozen vegetables or crushed ice in a plastic bag and wrapped in a thin towel. Be careful not to get the tensor and dressing wet. Do not put the ice pack directly on your skin.
- **Do not use heat packs on your operated knee.**

### **When can you shower?**

- You can take a shower 2-3 days after your operation.
- Before you take a shower, wrap your leg in plastic. (Your leg has to be wrapped in plastic when you shower until your stitches have been taken out).
- Avoid getting your dressing/tensor wet.
- **Do not take baths until instructed by your surgeon.**
- After your follow-up with your surgeon you may shower without the plastic covering.
- Remember to keep the wounds clean and dry at all times.

### **How to cope with your pain**

- Pain is normal after this operation and should get better with time.
- You will be given a prescription for pain medication. Take it to a pharmacy to get it filled and follow the directions for taking the medication. As soon as you are feeling pain take the medication. Do not wait until the pain becomes too severe. You can take the pain medication every 4 hours for the first 24 hours if you are feeling pain.
- As the pain becomes less and less, gradually decrease your pain medication until you no longer need any medication at all.
- You may also be given a prescription for the swelling (an anti-inflammatory). Fill it at a pharmacy and follow the directions for taking the medication.
- Pain medications can make you constipated. To prevent constipation, drink lots of fluids (3 to 5 glasses of water every day, each glass should be about 8 oz.). If you have not had a bowel movement for 72 hours, take Milk of Magnesia (follow the directions on the bottle). You can buy this from your pharmacy without a prescription.

### **Problems to watch for**

Call your surgeon, or call (416) 340-3155 and ask to speak to the Orthopedic Resident on call or go to the nearest hospital emergency department if the following occurs:

#### **Abnormal Bleeding that won't stop**

- Bleeding that soaks through the dressing and tensor, that will not stop even after apply pressure for 15 minutes.

### **Severe Pain**

- Severe pain that doesn't get better when you take the medication that was prescribed. Have the phone number of your pharmacy ready when you call, because the doctor might want to call your pharmacy to change your prescription.

### **Swelling**

- If one or more of the following occurs: lower calf becomes swollen and painful, your toes feel cool, there is a change in the colour of your foot, you have less feeling in your foot, or you can't move your toes.
- Fever
- Increased redness, pain or swelling at the wound sites.
- Yellowish, foul-smelling fluid coming from the wound sites
- If your temperature goes higher than 38°C or 101°F

### **Knee Exercises**

- These exercises may be started the day after your surgery to make the most of motion and strength.
- These exercises should be performed 3 times a day (morning, afternoon and evening).
- You should be relaxed and pain-free when doing these exercises.
- Perform these exercises in a comfortable position.
- Take your medication as prescribed to alleviate any discomfort if necessary.
- If pain and swelling make these exercises impossible to do, re-evaluate them on a daily basis.
- If pain and swelling are worse after the exercises, stop until your surgeon has seen you at the follow-up visit.

#### **1st Exercise-Static Quadriceps**

- Roll a small towel and put it under your operated knee.
- Tense muscle on top of thigh.
- Push back of knee into the towel.
- Hold this position for 5 seconds
- Repeat this 5-10 times, each morning, afternoon and evening.



### **2nd Exercise-Quadriceps over roll**

- **Do not do this exercise if you have an ACL tear**
- Roll up a large bath towel and place under your operated knee.
- Straighten your knee by tightening your top thigh muscle.
- Do not lift your knee off the towel.
- Hold this position for 5 seconds.
- Repeat this exercise 5 times and then work up to 10-15 times, every morning afternoon and evening.



### **3rd Exercise-Straight leg raise**

- Lie comfortably on your back.
- Bend your unaffected leg.
- Keep your operated leg straight.
- Tighten your thigh muscle of the operated leg and keep your knee straight.
- Lift your operated leg 12 inches (30 cm).
- Hold for 5 seconds.
- Repeat this 5 times and then work up to 20 times every morning, afternoon and evening.



**4th Exercise-Knee flexion (Bending your knee)**

- This exercise can be done in any position (lying, sitting or standing).
- Bend your operated knee as far as your knee can. Do not pull beyond this point.
- Perform this exercise 5 times and then work up to 10-15 times each morning, afternoon and evening.



**Your follow-up appointment:**

Your surgeon will see you in the Fracture Clinic. If you don't already have a follow-up appointment, please call the Fracture Clinic at **(416) 603-5858** to make one. Your appointment should be 2 weeks after your operation.

Doctor: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone no# \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_  
Location: \_\_\_\_\_

**Special instructions for you**

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