



Patient Care Services

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS AFTER TOTAL KNEE SURGERY

Since care of your new total knee will continue after discharge from the hospital, the following information will prove helpful when you go home.

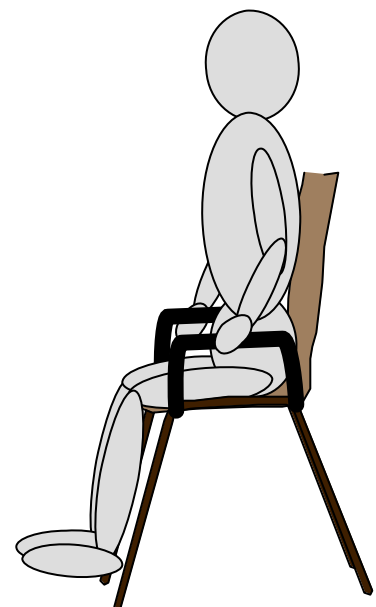
What to Expect:

After surgery, some discomfort is normal. Your physician will prescribe pain medication for you, or tell you which over-the-counter medications you can take. Taking pain medication will help you be more comfortable, making it easier to move, walk, deep breathe, and to rest. Take these medications with food to avoid upset stomach. You should gradually use less pain medication as you recover.

Activity:

Gentle exercise is very important for your recovery. Walking for a few minutes every day will help your knee heal. Try to increase your walking time a few minutes every day. Maintain your exercise regime that you have been taught by the physical therapist. Don't be shy – ask for help when you need it. Your goal is to be able to do things for yourself, but right now you need to take care of and protect your new knee until it fully heals.

- Do not twist your knee, as can happen when you turn your body without moving your feet.
- Do not perform high-impact activities, such as running, jumping, race Walking, or playing basketball.
- Sit in a firm chair that has arms to help you when you want to stand up.
- Try not to sit for more than 30 minutes at a time, then get up and move around a little.
- When lying down, do not put a pillow under your operative knee as this may cause stiffness in your knee and make it difficult to straighten your leg.



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- Use a raised toilet seat.
- When going up stairs, lead with your non-operated knee.
- When going down stairs, place your cane or crutch on the next step, lead with the operative leg and then follow with the non-operated leg.
- Your doctor may recommend a knee immobilizer to be worn at all times to assist in keeping your knee straight so some daily activities may be more difficult for a while.

Care of the Incision:

Some swelling and bruising at the site of the surgical incision are to be expected. These changes usually go away within two to four weeks after the operation.

Sponge baths may be necessary for the first few days. Ask your doctor when you may take a shower or a tub bath. Don't scrub your incision; let the water run over it and then pat it dry. Your doctor will let you know if he wants a dry dressing over the knee incision.

You will probably have tape strips called "steri strips" covering your incision on the outside. Leave them in place, and they will come off naturally in about a week.

Some people have stitches or staples instead of steri strips. Stitches or staples are usually removed 10 to 14 days after surgery in your surgeon's office. The incision should be kept dry for 24 hours after the staples or stitches are removed. Then you can shower as per the physician instructions.

Do not take tub baths, swim or soak in a hot tub or jacuzzi until your incision is completely healed (at least two weeks.) Refer to your physician's instructions.

Nutrition:

- Eat a balanced diet with lots of protein, fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Drink fluids, at least 6-8 glasses of water a day.
- If possible, increase the amount of fiber in your diet as constipation occurs frequently when activity is limited and pain medication is taken.
- If constipation persists, a stool softener or a gentle laxative may be necessary.

Home Care Instructions After Total Knee Surgery

Driving:

- Please ask your doctor for specific instructions regarding driving after surgery.
- Always wear your seatbelt.
- Never drive after taking pain medication.

Dental Work:

After total joint surgery, you may need to take antibiotics any time when you have dental work done, please contact your doctor. This is to prevent infection of your new total joint. Request prescription for these antibiotics from your doctor or dentist.

When to Call Your Doctor:

- Fever over 101° F.
- Significant increased pain in knee
- Drainage from incision
- Redness around incision
- Increased swelling around incision
- Chest pain
- Problems with breathing
- Calf pain or swelling in your legs

Keep your checkup appointment with your doctor. It is important to monitor the healing and function of your new knee.

Your new knee may set off metal detectors such as those found in airports and some buildings.