

Dr. Alford's Postoperative Instructions: Knee Arthroscopy

DIET

Begin with clear liquids and light foods (jellos, soups, etc.), and progress to your normal diet if you are not nauseated.

WOUND CARE

Remove surgical dressing on the third post-operative day – if minimal drainage is present, apply band-aids or a clean dressing over incisions and change daily – you may then shave as long as the wounds remain sealed with the band-aid. DO NOT PUT any alcohol, lotions, or any other medications on your sutures. You can clean AROUND the area with a CLEAN washcloth and soap and water ONLY. To avoid infection, keep surgical dressing clean and dry – you may shower by placing a large garbage bag over your knee starting the day after surgery – NO immersion of operative leg (i.e. bath). After you have removed the dressings on day 3, you may shower and carefully dry off your operative leg.

MEDICATIONS

During your arthroscopy, a small amount of anesthetic was injected into your knee. This will last about 8 hours after the surgery, at which time your knee will begin to ache a little more. This is normal. It is common to require narcotic medication for a short while. Do not drive a car or operate machinery while taking the narcotic medication. Ibuprofen 200-400mg (i.e. Advil) should be taken in between the narcotic pain medication to reduce overall amount of pain medication required.

ACTIVITY

You are permitted to bear weight on your surgical leg (Unless otherwise instructed by Dr. Alford). It is normal to feel discomfort as a result of the surgery for a few days following the arthroscopy, and for this reason, you have been provided with crutches. Although your knee will ache and feel “tight” during the first week, you should try to gradually increase your range of motion. When you feel comfortable to do so, you may stop using crutches and begin to walk normally. Avoid long periods of sitting (without leg elevated) or long distance traveling for 2 weeks.

Starting 2 days after surgery you should follow the following exercises 3 to 5 times per day

- Bend and straighten your knee off the edge of the bed
- Strengthen quads by pushing your knee down into the bed.
- Strengthen hamstrings by pulling you heel up toward your buttocks.
- Pump your ankles and curl your toes 10-15 times each hour to help reduce swelling in your leg.

ICE THERAPY

Begin icing your knee immediately after surgery. Ice your knee 4-5 times a day for 20 minutes at a time. We recommend that you do this at least for the first 3 days.

EMERGENCIES

Contact Dr. Alford or his office at 401-738-3730 if any of the following are present: Painful swelling or numbness (note that some swelling and numbness is normal), unrelenting pain, fever (over 101 degrees - it is normal to have a low grade fever for the first day or two following surgery) or chills, redness around incisions, color change in foot or ankle, continuous drainage or bleeding from incision (a small amount of drainage is expected), difficulty breathing, excessive nausea/vomiting, or severe calf pain. If you have an emergency after office hours or on the weekend, contact our office (401-738-3730) and you will be connected to our page service – this will contact Dr. Alford or one of his covering partners if he is unavailable. If you have an emergency that requires immediate attention, proceed to the nearest emergency room.

FOLLOW-UP CARE/QUESTIONS

If you have any other questions/concerns, do not hesitate to contact Dr. Alford's office at 401-738-3730. If you do not already have a post-operative appointment scheduled, please contact the office as soon as possible to schedule an appointment.