

## **Post Op TOTAL / UNI Knee Replacement**

### **Patient Instructions**

#### **Instructions:**

#### **Medications:**

- Resume your regular medications unless directed otherwise.
- Follow the pain control program outlined in your pain med trial.
- Take your primary (non-narcotic) pain medications for 2-3 months.
- Stop using narcotic pain medications as soon as tolerable.
- Take one 325 mg aspirin every day for 6 weeks following surgery, unless you take a blood thinning medication like Coumadin (Warfarin) or clopidogrel (Plavix). Follow instructions regarding these other blood thinning medications.

#### **Edema/Leg Swelling Control:**

- Keep your knee flat whenever you are not doing your exercises for the first three days. After the first 3 days, elevate your leg for 15-20 minutes, 4 times a day and as needed for swelling or pain.
- Use an ice pack on your knee – 4 times per day, 15-20 intervals, for a minimum of 2 weeks after surgery.
- Wear the knee high stockings 24 hours a day for 14 days after surgery. Remove stockings only for showers, wound care and if the stocking needs to be washed.

#### **Prevent Blood Clots:**

- Best prevention is to follow your exercise program.
- Walk, do your exercises and drink plenty of fluids.
- Take one 325 mg aspirin each day following surgery as mentioned above.

#### **Wound Care and Bathing:**

Your nurse will review with you how to change your dressing prior to discharge from the hospital or surgery center.

#### ***If you have a white “island” dressing on:***

- Keep the dressing on, clean and dry for 3 days and sponge bath only, taking care to keep the dressing dry.
- If there is a significant amount of drainage on the bandage, you can re-enforce it by placing an ABD pad (provided to you prior to discharge) on top of the existing bandage

and securing it with an ace wrap. If the dressing is completely saturated, please re-enforce as instructed and call my office for further instructions.

- You may remove the initial island dressing 72 hours after surgery, at which time you will change the bandage once daily and as needed. At that time, you may shower as long as the incision is dry with no active draining.
- When showering, gently wash the incision site with mild soap and let water run over to rinse. Pat dry. Do not scrub or run the incision site. Place a new “island” dressing on the incision. Change dressing daily until your staples are out.
- After day 10, no dressings will be needed.

***If you have an Aquacel dressing on:***

- The Aquacel dressing will remain on for 7 days.
- You can shower with the dressing on beginning the day after surgery, if there is a good seal. If there are gaps or “puckers” in the dressing, use a warm dry towel or blow-dryer on low heat to warm the dressing and gently press the edges to smooth it out and adhere it to the skin. If you achieve a good seal, you may shower. If you are unable to get a good seal, contact our office for a dressing change.
- Bleeding may not be seen through the dressing. If bleeding spreads side to side on the dressing and reaches the outer edges of the dressing, please contact our office to make arrangements for a dressing change. Please do not remove the bandage yourself during the first 7 days.
- If the drainage is significant and is leaking out of the dressing, reinforce it by placing an ABD pad over the dressing and securing with an ace wrap. Call our office for a dressing change.
- After 7 days, the Aquacel dressing can be removed. You may see a purple mesh strip on the incision; take care not to pull this off as it is what is holding your incision closed.
- After you remove the Aquacel dressing on the 7<sup>th</sup> day, you can shower without the wound covered. When showering after the dressing is removed, gently wash with mild soap and allow the water to run over the incision to rinse. Pat dry. Do not rub or scrub the incision site. Place a new dressing over the incision.
- Change the dressing daily, and as needed, for days 7 through 14. After 14 days, you will no longer need a dressing. No bathtubs, hot tubs or pools for 2 weeks.

**Activity Level/Exercise Program:** *(Physical Therapy begins 3-5 days post op)*

Please refer to Dr. Bent's instructions for your home exercise program (see *post op knee exercise handout*). Here are the highlights:

- Quadriceps Sets – 15 minutes, 4 times a day
- Knee Bending Exercises (Heel Slides) – 15 minutes, 4 times a day
- Straight Leg Raises – 15 minutes, 4 times a day
- Walk – 15 minutes, 4 times a day

**Diet & Constipation Prevention:**

Drink plenty of fluids and eat high fiber foods such as uncooked fruits, raw vegetables, whole grains, etc. Take a stool softener once or twice a day while taking pain medications (see constipation protocol). If you go 1 day without having a bowel movement, take Mirilax as directed in addition to the stool softener. Walking will also help to keep your bowels moving regularly.

**Additional Instructions:**

- Wear the knee brace/immobilizer while walking and sleeping for 2 weeks. Remove for exercises and daytime resting.

**Precautions:**

- Don't overdo it - listen to your body.
- Don't drive for 6 weeks and until you are off your walker, off your narcotics and feel safe driving.
- Don't kneel for 4 weeks in order to let the incision heal.

**Deep Breathing Exercises:**

- It is important that you do coughing and deep breathing as instructed to keep your lungs open while you heal. If you do not practice deep breathing and coughing after surgery you may develop lung problems, like pneumonia.
- To perform deep breathing exercises, take a slow, deep breath in through your nose. Hold your breath for 2-5 seconds, and then gently and slowly breathe out through your mouth with pursed lips (like blowing out a candle). REPEAT 10-15 times every ½ hour while awake.

**Report these signs immediately to your doctor:**

- Chest pain or shortness of breath - report to the emergency room. For other signs below, call my office.
- Increasing leg swelling that doesn't go away with leg elevation and/or new pain when you squeeze your calf muscle.
- Temperature of 101.5 or more.
- Your knee is red, hot and/or swollen.
- Greenish pus-like drainage that continues 6 days after surgery.
- If you can't keep down liquids or light foods 6-8 hours after going home.
- If you are unable to have a bowel movement in 2-3 days and you have followed the constipation program instructions.

Have a responsible adult remain with you for the first 48 hours after surgery. If you have any questions or concerns before your next scheduled appointment, please call my office at 541-472-0603.