

# Discharge Instructions for After Your Total Knee Replacement

## Notify Your Surgeon if You Develop the Following Symptoms:

- Fever of **101.5°** or higher
- Severe pain associated with twisting, turning or injury that doesn't decrease with rest
- Continued drainage, swelling, or burning from the operative site
- Continued change in color and/or coolness of the operated leg/foot
- **Chest pain or shortness of breath CALL 911**

## Incision Care and Showering:

- Wash your hands before and after any incision care
- You may shower as soon as you return home
- Do not scrub and/or wash the incision site
- You have:
  - A waterproof antimicrobial dressing or
  - An ace wrap with antimicrobial gauze covering your incision.
- The waterproof antimicrobial dressing does not need to be changed. If it is saturated, keep it on and wrap the knee with the gauze and ace wrap provided.
- The ace wrap dressing should be changed on the second day after surgery and then daily thereafter or as needed.
- These dressings can be removed and discontinued \_\_\_\_\_ days after surgery, as long as the incision remains dry. If drainage continues, contact your surgeon.
- You may have steri-strips (white strips running along your incision) that may begin to peel and fall off. Leave the steri-strips on until they fall off on their own. At your follow-up visit, your surgeon will remove them if they are still on
- **No** tub baths, hot tubs or swimming until after your follow up appointment with your surgeon

## Elastic Stockings:

- Wear them during the day and evening for 3 weeks
- You may remove them at bedtime
- Continue active ankle pumps to help circulate your blood



## Medications:

- Please see the Medication Reconciliation Sheet for a complete list of your medications
- Anti-inflammatories, Tylenol, ice, limiting over-activity and controlling swelling are also effective in managing pain
- **Use narcotics sparingly/as prescribed. Your surgeon would like you completely off narcotics by 2 weeks (14 days) after your surgery**
- **DO NOT** take narcotics to get more out of your therapy sessions

## Activity and Restrictions:

- See a copy of exercises from your surgeon provided to you by your Physical Therapist
- Avoid prolonged periods of sitting, standing or walking to prevent excessive swelling. Limit each of those to a 1-hour limit for the first 5-7 days after your surgery
- Use two crutches or a walker with EVERY STEP until you are walking with minimal or no pain and also without a significant limp.
- **NO DRIVING if on narcotic pain medication**
- Apply ice to operative area frequently (remove or reposition ice every 20 minutes)
- Spend more time in bed with your leg at heart level if you are experiencing excessive swelling
- Do not apply heat near incision
- Do not twist or pivot on the operated knee
- Do not kneel on the operated knee
- Do not place a pillow under your knee. Only place a pillow under your calf or ankle
- If applicable, you may wear the knee immobilizer at bedtime for 14 days if having trouble obtaining full knee extension (straightening)
- Deep breathing is helpful to decrease chances of developing pneumonia. Take three deep breathes every hour while awake.

## Dental Work:

- You must inform your dentist about your new joint replacement. Avoid all dental work except in case of emergency for 3 months (90 days) after surgery. Notify your surgeon if you have a dental emergency. Follow up with your surgeon if you have further questions.

If you are going home the day of surgery, you must have a responsible adult with you 24 hours after anesthesia for your comfort and safety.

It's important that you follow-up with your surgeon for a visit in the office after your surgery.