

KNEE REPLACEMENT POSTOP INSTRUCTIONS AND ADVICE

- Wound care
 - It is ok to remove dressings in 2 days unless otherwise instructed. Once the dressings are removed it is OK to shower and get the incision wet with soap and water. Do not scrub the incision sites, but let the soap and water run over them and gently pat them dry. Any white adhesive strips (steri strips) should be left on until you return in two weeks for your follow up. Do not put any antibiotic ointment, moisturizer, or scar lotions on your incisions.
 - If you have a Prevena (wound vac – purple sponge), you should have been instructed as to its use in the hospital. If the machine fails for any reason or if the sponge is saturated but not draining into the canister, remove it and throw the entire apparatus away and care for your incision per the above instructions.
- Pain medication
 - Even with the use of pain medication, it is not expected that you will be 100% pain free. Some discomfort is expected after surgery. You will receive a narcotic pain medication for post-operative pain control. This prescription is expected to last a minimum of 7-10 days. After the first day or two at home, you can begin spacing out your dosages or taking less medication as you feel comfortable. Please note that we will not be able to provide refills for pain medication on the weekend, plan ahead and call us before noon on Friday.
 - You have received a prescription for Celebrex, which is a strong anti-inflammatory, to help with your swelling. You should take this twice daily for the first month regardless of how your knee feels. Do not take any Advil, Aleve, Ibuprofen, Motrin or any other NSAID while you are taking this.
 - As long as you are taking your prescription pain medication, you should take a capful of Miralax or similar over the counter stool softener daily as constipation is inevitable with prolonged narcotic usage
 - We will discontinue the use of all pain medications at 6-8 weeks post-op. If you believe that you still require pain medication at this point, you may request a referral to a pain management specialist.
- Walking aids
 - You will use a walker for AT LEAST the first two weeks after surgery. The decision to discontinue your walker should be shared between you and your physical therapist. It is based on safety as a fall in the early postoperative period can be devastating. I would rather you be slow moving and frustrated than fall!
- Swelling management
 - Do not be alarmed if you develop swelling in the surgical knee and leg. This is expected and can take several MONTHS to subside. As you become more active, your swelling may increase. This is not concerning.
 - Elevate your knee above the heart when possible to control swelling. The preferred technique is to use 3-4 pillows under the foot and ankle only with nothing under the knee. This will help keep the knee straight. Use an ice pack for the at least the first 72 hours, no more than 20 minutes per hour, then as needed after 3 days.

- You will go home with tight white compression stockings called TED hose. They should stay on for the first two weeks during the day but can be removed for showers/sleep.
- Blood clots
 - Blood clots (DVTs) are rare following knee replacement, but are a very serious complication that can cause death. Depending on your risk profile, you will be taking either an aspirin twice daily or a prescription blood thinner (usually Xarelto unless you are already on another one from your cardiologist/PCP).
 - Bruising (even really ugly bruising) is normal, sometimes going as far from the hip to the foot. It may get worse over the first two weeks. It can take several weeks to completely dissipate. This is normal.
 - If you notice increasing pain when you squeeze your calf, increased redness or hardness of the calf, or any shortness of breath, call us if during business hours so we can get an ultrasound done right away, or go to the ER if it is after hours or on the weekend. We don't mess around with blood clots – this is really the only way that a knee replacement can kill you!
- Antibiotics
 - You receive IV antibiotics while you are in the hospital, we do not routinely prescribe antibiotics post operatively.
 - Your dentist or GI doctor may ask as they used to require prophylactic antibiotics for people who had a joint replacement, but there is no convincing study to support this practice, so we do not prescribe any. However, you should wait a minimum of three months for any elective GI/dental procedure after your knee replacement
- Miscellaneous
 - Do not be alarmed by any clicking, popping, or other noises in the knee if they are not painful. This is normal. Typically, as your strength returns, this goes away or is at least greatly reduced. These are the harmless result of synthetic joint surfaces contacting each other and are common to all knee replacements.
 - You may develop some numbness or altered sensation to the outer aspect of your knee. This is completely normal, and typically will largely resolve over 6-12 months.
 - You may drive when you are comfortably walking without any walking aids and are no longer taking pain medication. This is typically 3-4 weeks after surgery, but can be longer. Common sense is key! If you do not feel that it is safe for you to drive, please wait until you are ready. Your physical therapist can be an excellent guide and resource in this matter.
 - Knee replacement is a MAJOR surgery. It is common for people to have altered appetities, bowel habits, depression, and mood swings, and it can take several months for the body and mind to recover from any major surgery
- **Call 214-383-9356** for any questions/concerns. Also, call if you have any of the following postop problems: pain not controlled by oral medications, fever greater than 101, persistent bleeding or drainage from the incisions more than 5 days after surgery, calf pain, or any medication reactions. For any urgent issues, please use the after hours/emergency line from the main number (option 2 in the voicemail greeting, followed by option 2 for Dr. Parker), and leave your message, and your call will be returned as quickly as possible.