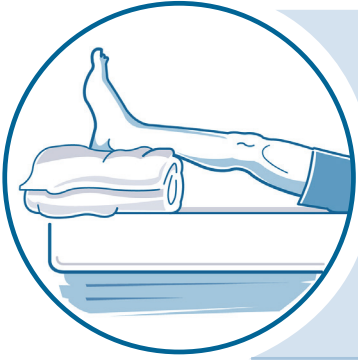


Total Knee Replacement Patient Discharge Instructions

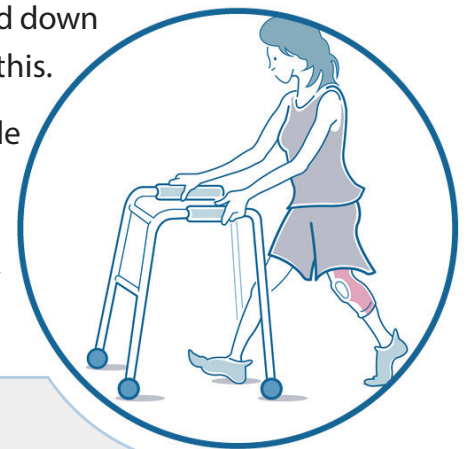
Activity: PACE YOURSELF!



Elevate the operative leg with pillows to help decrease swelling. Keep these pillows under your ankle so the knee stays straight. DO NOT keep them under your knee so the knee is bent. Do this when you sleep as well. Ice the knee four times a day for 30 minutes.

Walk outside the house with your crutches or cane daily. You need to get outside to build up some momentum when you walk. The walk is intended to build up endurance, so we want you to do this walk once daily. Each day go a little further, for instance 20 steps, one house, or a half a block further. Walking around in the house is not enough exercise. You can walk in the house as needed to do your usual daily activities such as showering, eating, and cooking. If it is hot or raining you can walk at any place that is covered and relatively flat. If you live in an area with hills you may need to drive somewhere to do your daily walks. Going up and down steep hills can be difficult at first, but eventually you'll be able to do this.

Start with walking a short distance, and increasing your distance a little each day. At six weeks most patients can walk about one mile. If you haven't walked a mile in 20 years, this probably will not be your goal. If you normally walk more than two miles a day, you may need to slow down so you do not get too sore.



Take pain medication 30 minutes before exercising or walking. Exercise once or twice a day according to your physical therapist's instructions. Do bending exercises two to three times a day while sitting at the edge of the bed or chair. Rest for an hour in the morning and an hour in the afternoon in bed.

It is okay to go out to the market, visit friends, and go out to eat when you feel well. You may travel by car. It is recommended that you do not sit for more than one hour or you will get stiff in your operative joint.

Medications

Do not combine these medications with any traditional or herbal medications.

Blood thinner: You will get a blood thinner to prevent blood clots after surgery. You should take this every day.

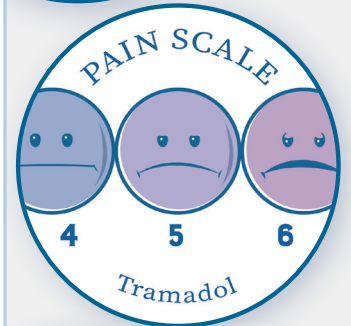
Pain medication: You will get medication after surgery to help control your pain.

Swelling medication: You will also get a medication to help with your swelling after surgery.

Stool softener: You will get a medication to help you with your stools while you are on pain medication.

Antacid: You will get a medication to help your stomach.

Miscellaneous: You will get other medications to help your recovery.



Incision

Check your incision every day. Wash your hands before touching your incision. If your incision is dry, with no drainage or blisters, you may shower. NO TUB BATHS until approved by the doctor. Do not let the shower water run too hot. It can make you feel a bit weak or dizzy. Do not take a shower until you feel strong enough to stand for 5 to 10 minutes. A sponge bath at the sink is good until you feel well enough to shower.



Do not scrub at the incision. Just use your regular soaps and shampoos and let the water run down your body and rinse over the top of the incision. After the shower, pat the incision gently dry with a towel. Do not rub your incision. Do not apply any creams to your incision. You may notice a piece of suture at the top and bottom of your incision. The suture is clear and looks like a piece of fishing line. Do not pull it. Have a family member use manicure scissors to cut it off close to the skin. Most of the time, if left alone, the suture will fall off by itself.



Do not use a whirlpool bath for six weeks. Swimming pools are okay after six weeks if there are handrails to use. You must be able to get in and out safely.

Swelling

All patients have some degree of swelling. You usually notice it more after you go home and you are on your feet longer. The swelling from your knee gets pulled into the ankle by gravity. If you notice an increase in your ankle swelling, then you must increase the time that you elevate your legs with your ankles slightly higher than your heart.

If the swelling does not go down with your legs elevated, then you should call your doctor's office. It is a good idea to not be up for more than two hours at a time. After being up for two hours you should lie down and elevate your legs for an hour or so. You must find your body's balance of activity and rest. You need enough activity to gain motion and strength, but enough rest to control pain and swelling.

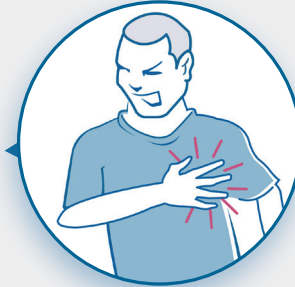
When to call your doctor



Contact your doctor or Operation Walk if you experience any of the following:

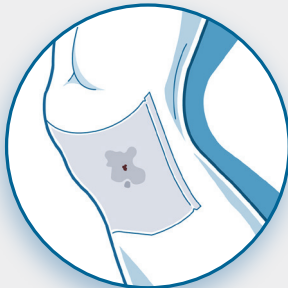


Chest pain



Fevers

Changes to your incision:



New redness

Swelling

Drainage

Severe calf pain

