

Post-Op Instructions Knee Arthroplasty



Total Knee Arthroplasty

Once you have been diagnosed with an arthritic knee or a condition that would benefit from total knee arthroplasty, generally the timing is dictated by the patient's pain. When you feel that the pain and limitations are significant enough to warrant surgical intervention, the time is then appropriate for total knee arthroplasty. Generally, it is scheduled when a patient can take six to twelve weeks of time for recovery after the surgery. Prior to the operation you will attend a class outlining much of the information regarding your joint replacement. Additionally, you will receive information regarding blood transfusion and blood donation.

Return to work; For patients with sedentary employment, many can return to work by four to six weeks. For patients with more vigorous, standing activities during their work day, where accommodations cannot be made over the short term for a more sedentary type of employment, it is six to eight weeks prior to return to full duty.

Recovery; After the operation, you will spend 3 days in the hospital. Depending on your progress with physical therapy, and depending on your support at home, you may need to spend 1-2 weeks in a rehab facility.

The patients are generally allowed to fully weight bear on the leg after the surgery. Frequently, they are on crutches or use a walker for approximately 2 weeks then to a cane for another 4-6 weeks. A slight limp may persist until the patient is two to three months out from surgery.

Patients will begin a therapy program in the hospital and will continue this at home, a therapists will visit your home to work with you in your rehabilitation. It is important to work hard at getting normal range of motion. 3 times a day you should lie on the floor and place a large rolled up towel under your heel and work on getting the leg straight. Your therapy will

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then continue in an outpatient setting.

Necessary equipment will be arranged for delivery to your house during your stay in the hospital. Discharge planners will assist in arranging this and your discharge needs.

Driving; Driving is restricted after total knee arthroplasty. For the first four weeks, the restriction is primarily based upon the regaining thigh muscle control and reflexes required to safely operate an vehicle.

Surgery; Surgery takes on average 1 ½ to 2 hours, the surgeon will come out and speak with family members after the surgery. Plan on having family members remain in the waiting area if they wish to speak with the surgeon.

Activities; After total knee arthroplasty, patients are encouraged to walk both as part of their rehab and for general cardiovascular fitness. Other machines such as a Nordic Track, stationary bike, or elliptical trainer and treadmill can be used. Activities such as jogging, racquet sports, and

basketball should be discouraged. However, occasional activities such as recreational softball or light doubles tennis can be permitted.

After a joint replacement arthroplasty, the patient should be careful with invasive procedures. These include dental procedures, colonoscopy, cystoscopy, or other major surgeries. The patient should make their dentist or doctor aware that they have a joint replacement. **Patients must take oral or intravenous antibiotics at the time of the procedure** for the first 2 years after the surgery and **forever for major procedures or if you have significant medical problems such as diabetes.**

This is to protect the replacement from the possibility of infection. If there is any question about infection contact your surgeon.

Warning; In the early period after the operation it is important to pay attention to the healing of your new knee. After you leave the hospital be

aware of **redness or drainage** from the incision. Likewise if you experience new **calf pain or calf swelling** alert the medical office of these problems.

Follow up; You will see your surgeon 2-4 weeks after the operation to review the status of your surgical incision, and assess for signs of infection. You may need an X-ray at this visit so plan on being there 30 minutes before the appointment to get your X-rays taken. 3 month, 6 month and 1year follow ups may be needed. Then every 2- 3 years thereafter.

Additional resources

Web sites

Kaiser Permanente
kaiserpermanente.org

WomenHeart: the National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease
womenheart.org

American Heart Association
women.americanheart.org

National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI)
nhlbi.nih.gov

Books

Kaiser Permanente Menopause Guide Book

Kaiser Permanente Healthwise® Handbook

The American Heart Association Cookbook—25th Anniversary Edition

The 90-Day Fitness Walking Program
Mark Fenton, Seth Bauer

The No-Nag, No-Guilt, No Hassle Guide to Quitting Smoking
Tom Ferguson, MD