



## **Dr. Heinrich - Post operative instructions for Total/Partial Knee Arthroplasty**

**DIET** - Begin with clear liquids and light foods. Progress to your normal diet if you are not nauseated.

**WOUND CARE** - Maintain your operative dressing, loosen the bandage if swelling of the foot and ankle occurs. It is normal for the knee to bleed and swell following surgery—if blood soaks onto the dressing, do not become alarmed—reinforce with additional dressing/ACE wraps.

You have small white band-aids covering the larger incision over your knee. Keep these on until you are seen in the office.

To help avoid infection, keep surgical incisions clean and dry—you may shower 3 days after surgery by placing a large garbage bag over your knee. Saran wrap over the bandage with tape sealing the top and bottom also works well. The dressing needs to remain on for 1 week post operatively.

NO soaking or scrubbing of the operative leg (i.e. bath).

**MEDICATIONS** - Pain medication is injected into the incision and joint during surgery. This will wear off in 8-24 hours.

Most patients will require some narcotic pain medication for a short period of time. This should be taken as directed on the bottle. Common side effects of the pain medication include nausea, drowsiness, and constipation. To decrease the side effects, take medication with food. If constipation occurs, take an over the counter laxative. You are also given a medication for any nausea/vomiting called Zofran or Phenergen that you may take as needed. However, if this does not help and you continue to have problems with nausea and vomiting, please contact the office.

Do not drive a car or operate machinery while taking the narcotic pain medication.

Ibuprofen up to 200-400 mg three times a day (every 8 hours) may be taken in between the narcotic pain medication to help smooth out the post operative peaks and valleys to reduce overall amount of pain medication required, and increase the time intervals between narcotic pain medication usages. You can take both the Ibuprofen and the narcotic if necessary but keep each individual medication on their own schedule. For example, if you take the narcotic (every 4-6hours) at 12pm you can take it again at 6pm. You may take Ibuprofen (every 8 hours) at 2pm and then take again at 10pm.

**ACTIVITY** – Elevate the operative leg above the level of your heart whenever possible to decrease swelling. Do not place pillows under knees (i.e. do not maintain knee in a flexed or bend position), but rather place pillows under foot/ankle.

Use crutches to assist with walking- YOU MAY PLACE FULL ON AFFECTED LEG unless otherwise instructed by the physician. DO not engage in activities which increase knee



pain/swelling (prolonged periods of standing or walking) over the first 7-10 days following surgery. Avoid long periods of sitting (without leg elevated) or long distance traveling for 2 weeks. NO driving until instructed otherwise by physician. You may return to sedentary work ONLY or school 3-4 days after surgery, if pain is tolerable.

**ICE THERAPY** - Begin immediately after surgery. Use icing machine continuously or ice packs if machine not prescribed 30 minutes every 2 hours daily until your first post operative visit. This will help reduce pain and swelling of knee. Remember to keep knee elevated to level of your heart while icing.

**EXERCISE** – Begin exercises 24 hours after surgery (straight leg raises, heel slides and ankle pumps) unless otherwise instructed. Discomfort and knee stiffness is normal for a few days following surgery- it is safe, and in fact, preferable to bend your knee (unless otherwise instructed by a physician).

Complete exercises 3-4 times daily until your first post operative visit- your motion goals are to have complete extension (straightening) and 120 degrees of flexion (bending) at your first post operative visit unless otherwise instructed.

Formal physical therapy should start as soon as possible. We will give you a prescription for the preoperatively. We have several therapists that we use and will give you a list of locations for you to call and make your appointment. Please call them as soon as possible so you can make sure your therapy starts right after surgery.

We have specific protocols that you will follow based on the procedure you had. You can access these on our website at [johnheinrichmd.com](http://johnheinrichmd.com)

Dental procedures and cleanings may not be scheduled until 3 months after surgery. Before any dental procedures and cleanings, you will need to take an antibiotic the day of. Please contact the office for a prescription.

**Dental work/cleanings-**

Dental work including cleanings after total joint replacement require that patients take antibiotics for life of implant. First cleaning/dental work can not be scheduled until 3 months from surgery.

**EMERGENCIES** - contact the office at 214-265-3260 or contact Dr Heinrich directly at 214-326-9141.

- Painful swelling or numbness
- Unrelenting pain
- Fever (over 101.5) - it is normal to have a low grade fever for the first day or two following surgery or chills.
- Extreme redness around incisions



- Continuous drainage or bleeding from incision (a small amount of drainage is expected)
- Difficulty breathing
- Excessive nausea and vomiting
- Color change in leg, ankle, foot

**APPOINTMENTS** - You will have your first operative appointment made by the surgery scheduler. This appointment is typically 10-14 days after your surgery.

We appreciate you trusting us with your care. We know that surgery is a big deal and we are here to help you make it through so you can get back to doing what you enjoy!!!