

# ARTHROSCOPY POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

THE PORTLAND KNEE CLINIC Orthopedic Surgeons Specializing in the Knee

- 1) After your knee arthroscopy, you should go directly home and rest, keeping your knee straight and your leg elevated on pillows for approximately 24 to 48 hours. This will help minimize swelling and pain. Your knee will be numb immediately after surgery. This effect may last approximately 24 hours. When out of bed, you should use crutches/walker and bear full weight as tolerated on the operated leg. If you are up too much, your knee will swell and hurt more.
- 2) The Cryo Cuff (ice water bag) will be on the knee, over the surgical dressings, to help minimize swelling and pain. Exchange the ice water hourly or more often as desired. It helps to wear the Cryo Cuff at night although the water does not have to be exchanged as often (only when you awaken). If the Cryo Cuff slips down the leg when you are up or is removed at other times, make sure it is completely empty when reapplied. The top strap needs to be snug around the thigh and the lower strap slightly looser.
- 3) You will be given pain medication to use at home. You may begin to take this medication as the numbness in your knee wears off and additional pain control is needed. The medication may make you drowsy. You should not drink alcoholic beverages or drive while taking this medication. Also, the medication may make you nauseous if taken on an empty stomach. Use pain and swelling as a guide to determine the level of your activity. Take your prescription pain medication only as needed. You can take Aleve (2 pills twice daily) or Advil (3-4 pills three times daily) in addition to or instead of the prescription pain medication (assuming you have no contraindications such as impaired kidney function or taking blood thinning medication).
- 4) You or a family member may change or remove the dressing the day after surgery. Some swelling and oozing of blood can be expected, so there may be some staining of the dressings. This can usually be minimized by staying off your feet whenever possible. If there is a stocking on your non-operative leg, this may be removed when you get home. Keep the steri-strips and TED stocking on the operative leg, and if any wound drainage is still present, place several 4x4 gauze dressings over this area.
- 5) An office appointment should have been made for you to be seen following surgery. Further rehabilitation instructions will be given to you at that time. If you have any questions or problems, please call the office day or night.

## **AFTER THE 1<sup>ST</sup> POSTOPERATIVE VISIT**

- 1) Use your crutches as long as you have discomfort in your knee or if you walk with a limp. You may bear as much weight as tolerated.
- 2) DO NOT remove the Steri-Strips over the wounds or get these soaked. You may shower, but wait on baths for another week.
- 3) At least three times a day, do exercises to completely straighten your knee and work on bending your knee past a right angle. Also work on straight leg raises and exercises to tighten your quadricep muscle.
- 4) Continue to use the Cryo Cuff or ice after these knee motion exercises, and then as much as desired at other times.
- 5) Please do not be overactive on your knee during the first week.

## **AFTER ONE WEEK:**

- 1) At this time, you should be walking fairly well and have good knee motion.

2) The goal at this time is to restore all of your knee motion, and then work on increasing your leg and thigh strength. This may be accomplished by home exercises for motion, especially the use of a stationary bicycle. Start with the bicycle seat up high, and then slowly lower the seat to help regain knee flexion. If you have access to a pool, you may also begin swimming after two weeks. As your full motion returns over the next weeks, you may begin strengthening exercises. These can include step-ups, StairMaster, elliptical, bicycle with resistance, as well as other activities. After you do your daily exercises, you may use the Cryo Cuff to help with swelling and soreness.

3) You may begin increasing your activity level as tolerated. Excess swelling and pain are signs that you are overdoing it, so listen to your knee.

4) The doctor will assess your progress at approximately 3 to 6 weeks after surgery. If you have any questions between visits, please call the office.

**SIDE EFFECTS OF ANESTHESIA:** You may experience nausea, sore throat, and drowsiness. A responsible adult should be with you for the next 24 hours. Rest quietly for the remainder of the day. **DO NOT** drink alcohol for the next 24 hours or while taking any pain medications. **DO NOT** drive a car, make any legal decisions or operate machinery for 24 hours after having anesthesia or sedation.

Instructions Given By: \_\_\_\_\_

Patient Released To: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_