



Davis Spine & Orthopaedics

Spine and Orthopaedic Surgeon
Board Certified and Fellowship Trained

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Knee Arthroscopy Discharge Instructions

When to call 911:

- **If you are experiencing shortness of breath or chest pain, CALL 911.**
- **If you are having swallowing problems that interfere with your ability to breathe, call 911 and go to the ER. You MUST also contact the office to make us aware of your trip to the ER as we have no other way to know you are there.**

When to call the office: (even if it is after hours – call before going to the ER)

- **If your temperature exceeds 101.5° F.**
- **If your incision begins to separate.**
- **If your incision begins to drain more than it did at your time of discharge and/or you have drainage that is soaking through your dressing after one hour.**
- **If you have an increase in pain, swelling, or redness around the incision.**
- **If you have difficulty with controlling your bowel or bladder (not constipation).**

Discomfort:

- **Pain** -After surgery, pain is managed with narcotic medication. Because narcotic pain pills are addictive, they are used for a limited period (3 days).
- **Constipation** – Regular use of pain medication can cause constipation. You should drink lots of water and eat high fiber foods. Laxatives (e.g., Dulcolax, Senokot, Milk of Magnesia) can be bought without a prescription. Thereafter, pain is managed with acetaminophen (e.g., Tylenol). You may also use NSAIDs like Ibuprofen, Motrin, Aleve, or Naproxen if you have no contraindications to NSAIDs.
- **Hoarseness**, sore throat, or difficulty swallowing may occur in some patients and **should not be cause for alarm**. These symptoms usually resolve in 1 to 4 weeks.
- It is usual to experience some continued back and leg pain. This should progressively improve. Often, cramping pain or soreness is associated with increasing your activities too quickly. If this happens to you, try restricting your activities for a day or so which will often help dramatically. If there is a return of severe pain call the office.

Restrictions:

- To reduce pain and swelling, you should use ice and elevate the leg. A pillow can be placed under the knee for the first few days. Ice can be used 20 minutes on, 20 minutes off for the first few days as well.
- You should place a towel or cloth between the skin and ice to prevent skin injury.
- Sometimes the knee remains slightly painful and swollen for several days or weeks after a knee arthroscopy (depending on the particular procedure done).
- Sports, including gym, should be avoided until you are seen for your post-operative evaluation.

Activity:

- You can bear full weight and walk on the leg unless instructed otherwise by the surgeon. Crutches are usually needed for several days after arthroscopic surgery to help with stability and to decrease pain when walking.

- Patients can usually return to school or work when they are comfortable. Most patients will return after 3-4 days following a knee arthroscopy.
- Your surgeon will determine when you should start physical therapy to rebuild the strength in your leg and knee. This could be immediately after surgery or several weeks later. We will provide you with a referral with specific instructions.

Bathing/Incision Care:

- The bandages on the knee can be removed after 2 days. The tiny incisions are usually closed with absorbable sutures (will not need to be removed). If there are steri-strips (small pieces of tape) covering the incisions, they will fall off on their own in about 7-10 days.

Recovery and prevention:

We will see you for a follow up 2 weeks after your surgery. We will discuss the type of work you do at your follow up visits and we will decide together when to release you back to work.