

## *home care instructions / Marc Asselmeier, M.D.*

### **activity**

Following your knee surgery you may want to limit your activity for the first 5-7 days (i.e. not returning to work or school).

You may walk with the assistance of crutches, putting as much weight on the operative leg as comfort allows. If you experience an increase in discomfort or swelling, get off your feet, elevate your leg and apply the cooling pad or an ice pack.

### **cold therapy**

Generally this is most beneficial when used *continuously* during the first week for comfort and then as needed. This pad should be applied over the white stocking and under the brace. The blue motor tubing connects to the pad tubing. Plug the power cord into an electrical outlet and the unit will continuously circulate cold water through the pad as long as it is plugged in. You may use this type of cold therapy as often as you like. If you are using an ice pack, apply it for 20 minutes at a time, as often as every hour if desired. *The main benefit from cold therapy is increased comfort and decreased swelling.*

### **pain medication**

Generally you may be prescribed 2 different medications for use at home after surgery:

- *Toradol (Ketoralac)* is an anti-inflammatory and pain reliever. Take the first tablet 4 hours after leaving the surgery center, then 1 every 6 hours until finished. This medication will reduce the inflammation and as a result help to decrease pain and limit the need for narcotic medication.
- *Vicodin™ (Hydrocodone)* is a narcotic pain reliever. Use this in addition to Toradol. Take 1 tablet every 4 hours as needed for pain. Do not exceed 2 tablets within 6 hours.

### **brace/crutches**

The knee brace is for your protection while healing and muscle strengthening occur. It should always be worn when walking and putting weight on your operative leg. The brace should be locked in extension at night for the first 4 weeks. You may come out of the brace frequently for range of motion exercises. You should walk with the brace locked in extension until given the okay by your therapist to walk with it unlocked (generally 2 weeks). You will require this particular brace for up to 4 weeks after surgery. The crutches can be discontinued as soon as this is comfortable, usually between 1-2 weeks after surgery.

### **home care/dressing changes**

Home nursing care and physical therapy visits may be arranged for you. Your surgical dressing will be changed 24 hours postoperatively. Bandaid™s will be applied as well as a white stocking. The bandaids may be changed on a daily or every other day basis as needed. Hydrogen peroxide may be used to clean the incision. The physical therapist will help initiate moving your knee, contracting your muscles and assessing crutch walking. Initially fully extension will be stressed and flexion to 90 degrees. This may be done in and out of your brace.

### **showering/bathing**

For the first 7 days after surgery try to protect the incision sites from getting wet. You may shower a few days after surgery as long as the knee is kept dry by wrapping with plastic wrap or a garbage bag. After 10 days you may get the knee wet in the shower but you must wait 3 weeks after surgery before submerging the leg in a bath, pool or Jacuzzi™, and only if the incisions are completely closed. The white stocking should be removed for showering or bathing but should be worn **throughout** the first 2-3 weeks to decrease swelling and improve circulation and comfort.

### **signs of infection**

With any surgery it is important to be aware of signs of infection which can include unusual looking drainage, increased redness and tenderness around the incision sites, fevers (i.e. 101 F or higher) and chills, or a sudden decrease in flexibility. It is a good idea to check the wound each day or two while at home. Also be aware of excess bleeding or numbness or tingling of the foot or the toes. Please make your doctor aware as soon as possible should you develop any of these possible signs.

### **first post op visit**

If a postoperative appointment has not been scheduled for you to return 7-10 days after surgery please contact our appointment desk. On your first postoperative appointment you will have x-rays of your knee taken, your dressing changed, sutures removed and you will be examined by your physician. At this time physical therapy will be discussed. Outpatient physical therapy generally begin 10 days after surgery and continues up to 3 months depending on your progress.

If you have any further questions please call our office at 630 790 1872.