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Knee, Shoulder, Elbow Surgery

ORTHOSPORTS



Recovery From Total Knee Replacement

Day of Surgery:

This is the day you will be admitted to hospital for your surgery -

- The nurse will talk with you and prepare you for surgery. You will be visited by the anaesthetist who will examine you and make sure you are fully fit to undergo a general anaesthetic. In many cases the anaesthetist will explain to you the option of having a “block” which puts the legs to sleep and helps control pain after the surgery. The nursing staff will also explain the use of “patient controlled analgesia” (or PCA) where you regulate the amount of pain relieving medication that you use.
- Your family will be shown where to wait while you are in surgery.
- After surgery a nurse will check on you frequently. A dressing will cover your leg from your toes to your groin and there will be drainage tubes in place. Most patients will have a bladder catheter for 24 hours to monitor kidney function.
- Intravenous antibiotics will be administered and medication will be provided to relieve your pain.
- Ice will be used to reduce swelling in the knee.
- An elastic support stocking will be placed on your opposite leg to reduce the risk of a DVT (blood clot).
- You are to perform breathing and coughing exercises every hour you are awake to try and prevent pneumonia.
- When you are able to tolerate food and fluids you will be allowed to eat and drink.

Post Op – Day One:

You will sit in a chair with assistance and begin your physiotherapy programme.

- When you are sitting in a chair you must keep your leg fully straight or fully bent at all times. Do not rest the leg in 'mid range' as this leads to stiffness and loss of motion. The easiest way to keep the leg straight is to place your heel only on a footstool. Gravity will help to straighten your leg.
- When you are not sitting in a chair or working with the physiotherapist, you may rest in bed with your leg elevated. Do not place a pillow under your leg.
- Your diet will progress depending on your tolerance of food and fluids.
- When you are able to drink enough fluids, your intravenous fluids will be ceased.
- You will change to a tablet medication schedule with stronger pain killers as required.
- Your drainage tubes are likely to be removed.
- You will have a blood sample taken.

Post Op - Day Two:

You will continue with your physiotherapy.

- You will walk in your room and possibly the hall at least once.
- When in bed, your leg will remain elevated.
- You will be able to go into the bathroom with assistance.
- You will need to request pain medication as you feel the need. Pain medication will be offered to you before your physiotherapy session.
- The dressing on your knee may be changed.

Post Op - Day Three:

Your physiotherapist will help you determine the need for assisted devices such as toilet raises, walkers, crutches and hand rails.

- You will continue to walk in the hallway with your physiotherapist or nurse.
- When in bed, your leg will remain elevated.
- You will continue to request pain medication as required.
- You and your family will complete your daily care such as bathing, tooth brushing and hair combing. This is a good time to practice applying your support stockings.
- If possible, a family member should attend physiotherapy sessions with you to participate in these activities. In this way they can learn your exercises and how to assist you with transferring from your bed, chair and toilet.

Anticipated Day of Discharge:

You will participate in a final physiotherapy appointment before your discharge. Some patients require further assistance and will go to a rehabilitation facility rather than directly home.

- You will walk with your crutches or walker.
- Your family members will help you with your exercise programme and wound care.
- You will be provided discharge and medical review instructions.
- You should review your patient handout notes or ask your doctor about ongoing pain management, activity levels, driving, fatigue, lifting, showering and incision care.
- It is best to wear loose fitting clothes such as a tracksuit when you are discharged from the hospital. Tight fitting clothes can be uncomfortable after surgery. It is important to understand that each patient's recovery and daily activities may vary, but most patients stay in hospital for five days including the day of surgery.

March 2004

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