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## **POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS – TIBIA IM NAILING**

**PLEASE READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS COMPLETELY AND ASK FOR CLARIFICATION  
IF NECESSARY – DIRECT QUESTIONS TO YOUR NURSE BEFORE LEAVING THE  
HOSPITAL OR VIA PHONE TO DR. EILERS STAFF AFTER ARRIVING HOME**

**OFFICE NUMBER: 832.698.0111**

### **WHAT CAN I EXPECT AFTER SURGERY?**

- Pain, swelling, and bruising are not unusual after surgery.
- It is normal to feel drowsy, dizzy, or weak 24-48 hours afterward.
- An upset stomach (nausea), vomiting, fatigue, and a low-grade fever (not over 101.4°F) are possible due to medication you received during surgery. These usually improve within 24 hours.

### **ICE THERAPY**

- Begin immediately after surgery and continue until the first post-operative visit.
- If using a 'cryo-cuff' or similar ice/compression device, use as directed in the instruction manual.
- When using "real" ice, avoid direct skin contact > 20 mins to prevent damage/frostbite of skin.
- In either case, check the skin frequently for excessive redness, blistering or other signs of frostbite.
- Remember to keep the extremity elevated while icing when able.

### **WOUND CARE**

Wash your hands before and after caring for your incision

- Loosen bandage if swelling or progressive numbness occurs in the extremity.
- It is normal for the wound to bleed and swell following surgery – if blood soaks onto the ACE bandage, reinforce with additional gauze dressing for the remainder of day and check again.
- Keep the dressings clean and dry, and do not remove, for 2 days after surgery.
- On post-operative day 2, remove dressings (Thursday if surgery on Tuesday, Sunday if surgery on Friday).
- It is ok for water to run over the incisions in the shower, but do not soak or submerge the incisions in a bathtub, hot tub, or pool until completely healed (about 3-4 weeks).

- Redress incisions with gauze or band-aids after you shower, unless instructed to do otherwise. Rewrap with ACE bandage over the knee to keep brace from rubbing on the incisions.
- Do not use topicals such as Neosporin or hydrogen peroxide.
- If you have stitches, they will be removed 10-14 days after surgery.
- If you have Steri-strips over your incisions, do not remove. Leave them on until they fall off on their own.
- Call the office if you have any questions/concerns regarding the incision.

### **ACTIVITY**

- Rest at home the day of and the day after surgery. Slowly increase your activity each day as you feel comfortable.
- Do not engage in activities which increase knee pain/swelling (prolonged periods of standing or walking) over the first 7-10 days following surgery.
- Elevate the operative leg to chest level whenever possible to decrease swelling.
- Do not place pillows under knees (i.e. do not maintain knee in a flexed or bent position), but rather place pillows under foot/ankle.
- Do not drive until your surgeon says it is okay. Do not drive if taking narcotic pain medications.
- If you are planning air travel within 4 weeks of your surgery, please consult with Dr. Eilers office to discuss whether anticoagulation (medication to prevent blood clot) is necessary.

### **WEIGHT BEARING**

- It is ok to bear weight if there is no increased pain. Use crutches for balance if needed.
- If increased pain, maintain non-weight bearing with crutches.

### **PHYSICAL THERAPY**

- Physical therapy will start after your first post-operative visit if needed.
- May start ankle and knee range-of-motion to tolerance when comfortable. Do not push through pain.

### **DIET**

- Drink plenty of fluids. If you are taking pain medication, do not drink alcohol.

- Start by drinking small amounts of fluids, such as water, clear carbonated beverages, tea, or soup.
- Gradually add bland foods to your diet, such as dry toast, soup, or crackers.
- Start with light meals. Resume your regular diet as you feel comfortable.
- Pain medications can cause constipation. Eat fiber (fruits and vegetables) and drink plenty of fluids.
- Take the prescribed stool softener as directed if taking narcotic pain medications.
- If loss of appetite following surgery, use Boost or Ensure meal replacement shakes for nutrition.

## **EMERGENCIES**

- Contact the office if you are having any of these symptoms:
  - Painful swelling or numbness that progressively worsens
  - Fever of 101°F (38°C) or higher
  - Unrelenting pain
  - Persistent nausea and/or vomiting
  - Excessive bleeding or fluid from the surgical site
  - Symptoms of deep vein thrombosis (DVT) such as swelling, redness, warmth, or pain in your calf
  - Inability to urinate
  - Increased drowsiness from pain medication. Stop taking pain/narcotic medication if you become too drowsy
  - Increased or foul-smelling drainage from incision site
  - Significant redness, tenderness, or swelling around the incision
  - Separation of the skin closures

**IF YOU HAVE A NEED THAT REQUIRES IMMEDIATE ATTENTION, PROCEED TO THE NEAREST EMERGENCY ROOM OR CALL 911**