



**STERLING RIDGE  
ORTHOPAEDICS  
& SPORTS MEDICINE**

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**POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS**  
**TOTAL KNEE ARTHROPLASTY**

**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?**

- **Discharge from hospital:** You may go home the day of surgery if progressing well. If any concerns, you will stay overnight in the hospital and go home the following morning.
- Pain, swelling, and bruising are not unusual for the first 2 weeks after surgery.
- It is normal to feel drowsy, dizzy, or weak 24-48 hours afterwards. If you feel light-headed, rest a moment before standing AND have an adult assist you.
- 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.
- If using a 'cryo-cuff' or similar ice/compression device, use as directed in the instruction manual for the first 2 weeks following surgery.
- 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

- It is normal for the wound to bleed and swell following surgery – if blood soaks onto the outer dressings, reinforce with additional gauze/tape 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 the outer dressings and yellow gauze layer. There will be a clear gauze adhered to the skin, do not peel this off. This is a waterproof layer that stays on until your first post-operative visit. We will remove this layer in the office.
- You may get the incision wet in the shower on post-operative day 2.
- Redress incisions with large Primapore or island dressing. Do not use topicals such as Neosporin or peroxide.
- Do not submerge (soak) the incisions in a bathtub, hot tub, or pool until they are completely healed (about 3-4 weeks).
- 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.
- Continuous Passive Motion (CPM) machine. If insurance allows, you will receive the CPM machine the day of or day after surgery. You will be instructed on how to use.
- Prop up your heel on a pillow when you are not using the CPM machine. **Do NOT** put a pillow under your knee.
  - If the knee stays in a bent position for long periods of time it will want to heal in this position and it may be very hard to get full extension later.
- **Assistive devices:** Use your walker as directed for the first 2 weeks, or until instructed to discontinue use by PT.
- Do not drive until your surgeon says it is okay. Do not drive if taking narcotic pain medications.

### **PHYSICAL THERAPY**

- You will begin physical therapy the day after your surgery. Call our office if you do not already have a physical therapy appointment set up.
- Participate in physical therapy and fulfill the home exercises as instructed by the physical therapist. Exercise prevents muscle weakness, improves circulation, and rebuilds strength and flexibility.

## **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 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**