



Discharge Instructions Knee Arthroscopy

Recovery after knee arthroscopy entails controlling swelling and discomfort, return of range-of-motion of the knee joint, regaining strength in the muscles around the knee joint, and a gradual return to activities. The following instructions are intended as a guide to help you achieve these individual goals and recover as quickly as possible after your arthroscopic knee surgery.

Comfort:

Elevation – Elevate your knee and ankle above the level of your heart. The best position is lying down with two pillows lengthwise under your entire leg with your knee out straight. Do not place a pillow behind your knee as this rests your knee in a flexed position. This should be done for the first few days after arthroscopy.

Ice – Ice controls swelling and discomfort by slowing the circulation in your knee. Place crushed ice in a plastic bag, then wrap with a small towel to protect your skin. Place the ice over your knee for no more than 10 minutes, 3 times a day.

Pain Medication – If your physician has prescribed a pain medication for you, take it as prescribed but only as often as necessary. If no pain medication has been prescribed, Paracetamol can be used. Avoid alcohol if you are taking pain medication.

Activities:

Range-of-Motion – Move your knee through a full range-of-motion, as much as possible, to prevent stiffness.

Circulation Exercises – These help prevent complications such as blood clotting in your legs. Point and flex your foot and wiggle your toes as much as you can for the first week or two after arthroscopy.

Weightbearing Status – You are allowed to put all - part - touchdown - none of your weight on your operative leg. Do this within the limits of pain.

Crutches – Crutches may or may not be necessary, depending on your weightbearing status and your level of discomfort. Use them only if necessary.

Exercises – Thigh muscle tightening exercises should begin the day of surgery and should be done for 10 to 15 minutes, 3 times a day, for the first few weeks after arthroscopy. Imagine you have a small squash ball behind your knee and you are trying to flatten it into the bed!

Athletic Activities – Athletic activities, such as swimming, bicycling, jogging, running and stop-and-go sports, should be avoided until allowed by Dr Brick – after your first follow-up visit.

Return to Work – Return to work as soon as possible. Your ability to work depends on a number of factors – your level of discomfort and how much demand your job puts on your knees. If you have any questions, please call Dr Brick’s rooms on 09 477 2090.

Wound care:

Keep the dressing clean and dry for the first 3 days after surgery.

Remove the Bandage three days after surgery. You will have small waterproof dressings beneath this. Leave them in place until your first post-op visit.

You may shower 5 days after surgery, after the initial dressing has been removed. Apply new waterproof dressings if water gets beneath the old dressing. Do not disturb the paper “steritrips” applied to the small wounds. To bathe before this you can have a bath with you leg out the side or shower with your leg in a plastic “bin liner” bag sealed at the top with tape.

Bathing, swimming, and soaking of the knee should be avoided until allowed by Dr Brick – after your first follow-up visit.

Eating:

Your first few meals, after arthroscopy, should include light, easily digestible foods and plenty of liquids, since some people experience slight nausea as a temporary reaction to anesthesia.

Call Dr Brick if:

Pain in your knee persists or worsens in the first few days after surgery.

Excessive redness or drainage of cloudy or bloody material presents itself around the arthroscopy incisions. (A small amount of fresh blood is normal in the first 24 hours)

You have a temperature elevation greater than 37.5° with no other apparent cause.

You have pain, swelling or redness in your calf.

You notice numbness or weakness in your leg.

Return to the millennium rooms:

Your first return to our office should be within the first 1-2 weeks after your surgery. The appointment time is included in your pre-operative pack posted to you. If you need to change it, call Dr Brick's office on 09 477 2080.(You will speak with Rose or Bridget)