



**Ellen Ervin**  
(1961-2012)

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## **POST OPERATIVE PATIENT INFORMATION**

### **KNEE ARTHROSCOPY**

#### **PROCEDURE**

Your operation will be done through the arthroscope, a small telescope. Dr. Higgins will make 2 or 3 holes and look inside your knee. Any torn or abnormal tissue will be removed or repaired with special instruments.

#### **PAIN**

Dr. Higgins has a very particular routine to help make you comfortable (not necessarily pain free) after surgery. This routine includes prescription medicine, over the counter medicine, and ice. You will be given prescriptions for medicine that will help control pain, nausea, inflammation and infection. You will also be asked to take over the counter medication for pain control. Medication should be taken as directed on the calendar that will be given to you at your preoperative visit. The Cold Therapy Unit, alternative system, or ice bags should be worn continuously the first day and through the night for the first few weeks. This will help reduce pain and swelling. It is important to take the ice off throughout the day each 30-60 minutes to complete bending and straightening of the knee and squeezing the thigh muscles. Please keep a layer of cloth between the ice and your skin, not placing the ice directly on your skin. Your compression sleeve given to you on your first day of physical therapy can act as this layer. Your physical therapist will instruct you on the exercises. The ice and movement will help reduce the pain and swelling. Elevation will also help to decrease the swelling in your knee. Please keep your knee elevated above the level of your head when not completing activity.

#### **BANDAGE**

Steristrips, Band-Aids, a bulky pressure bandage and an ace bandage will be placed on your knee. They will soak up any blood or fluid that may seep from the incisions. All dressings may be removed the day after surgery or the physical therapist will change them at your initial evaluation. The feeling of water in the knee is normal. It is left over water from surgery. Some of this water may leak from the incisions and your body will absorb the rest. Band-Aids may be changed as needed after the first three days but never use Neosporin on the incisions.

## **WOUNDS**

The 2 or 3 holes may be sore and some bruising may develop over the first few days following surgery. You may also notice some bruising down the leg. This will go away and no special care is needed. Steristrips will be placed over the incisions and will fall off by themselves.

## **BATHING**

It is safe to bathe 24 hours after surgery. Your skin will have a sticky, orange substance on it from the cleansing solution used in surgery. This can be removed by using rubbing alcohol. To bathe, remove the ace bandage and bulky dressing, leaving the Steristrips and Band-Aids in place. Wash with regular soap and water. After showering, pat the Band-Aids dry or replace them, loosely reapply the ace bandage starting from the ankle and wrapping toward the thigh above the level of the knee, and replace the pad for the Cold Therapy System.

## **ACTIVITY**

Unless otherwise instructed, you are encouraged to bear as much weight as possible. Exercises are extremely important following arthroscopic surgery to help you regain motion, strength and flexibility of your knee. You may use your operated leg for whatever movements and activities you desire as long as there is no pain. Keep in mind, however, that you will have just undergone surgery. Due to the use of pain medication and regular icing, you are likely not receiving accurate feedback regarding your level of pain. Please curtail excessive activity for the first few days even if you are feeling minimal pain. Pain should definitely be your guide; **do not try to work through it**. If an activity is not painful, go ahead and use your leg as naturally as possible as long as you are able to do so with relatively normal walking patterns. If you are limping you should maintain use of your crutches for the first few days. However, expect to be off of your crutches by the end of the first week. You will begin physical therapy the day after surgery. Please see your surgery letter for the date and time of your appointment. If you have misplaced this letter, please contact our office at 301-232-1050.

## **RESULTS**

Surgery done through the arthroscope is very similar to the surgery done inside your knee through a larger incision. Even though the incisions are small, there has been an operation inside and around the knee joint. Complete healing may take several weeks or months.

## **PRECAUTIONS**

If you have a fever of 101 degrees, severe pain or redness in your knee please contact the office at 301-232-1050. If after hours, please call 240-401-0019. Swelling, some drainage and redness are normal.

## **FOLLOW UP**

Your appointment to see Dr. Higgins or Kristine has been made for about 1 week after your surgery. Please refer to your surgery letter for the date and time of your appointment. If you have misplaced your letter, please contact our office at 301-232-1050.