



BCSortho.com DRCL

## POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

# Knee Replacement

Dr. Colten Luedke

**Follow up appointment** 2 weeks- if you do not have a postop appointment set up already, call 979-776-0169 to arrange that appt for 2wks after surgery

### MEDICATION

- A strong pain medication has been prescribed for you. Take as instructed and as needed.
  - Pain medication may cause constipation. You may take an over the counter stool softener (Miralax, Colace, Senekot, etc) to help prevent this problem.
  - You should take these medicines with food or they may nauseate you.
  - You may not drive or operate heavy equipment while on narcotics
- You will have a nerve block, which blocks the pain fibers to the knee, but still allows you to walk and bend the knee. Blocks generally wear off 24-36 hours after surgery aka “honeymoon period”
- When you get home begin taking the pills as you feel your sensation returning to prevent a sudden onset of extreme pain
  - The first 48 hours are typically the worst for pain and gradually improves
  - You will also be prescribed Celebrex for inflammation if not allergic. This helps reduce the amount of narcotic pain medication needed

**Blood Clots**- *the risk of blood clots is about 3% after a knee replacement. I am very serious about preventing complications postoperatively. Therefore, these are the measures proven beneficial to prevent blood clots.*

- Take one regular aspirin (325 mg) twice a day for 30 days unless you have been prescribed Lovenox, are on another blood thinner, or have a history of stomach ulcers.
  - If you were already on a blood thinner other than aspirin, we will resume that medication
- Wear the TED stockings given to you at the hospital for 2 weeks. They help control swelling in the leg. A non-stick dressing over the incision will help prevent the stocking from catching on the incision.
  - I know they are not fun, but blood clots are much worse

Dr. Colten Luedke, Orthopaedic Surgery -(979) 776-0169

[www.BCSortho.com](http://www.BCSortho.com)

[www.DRCLuedke.com](http://www.DRCLuedke.com)



**BCSortho.com**

**DRCL**

- Ankle pumps – pumping your ankles up and down will help blood flow
- Get up!! Getting up and walking a few times per hour while awake also helps reduce the risk of blood clots.

### **WOUND CARE**

- A special dressing called Aquacel Ag is placed over your incision. This dressing is a natural anti-microbial to help prevent infection & is also waterproof. You can begin showering over it immediately.
- Your stitches are dissolvable and we will not have to remove stitches when we see you back
- NO submersion of wounds under water (bath, hot tub, pool) is allowed until instructed it to be safe.

### **Walker**

- Continue putting full weight on the operative leg.
- Continue the exercises taught to you by our therapists
- Most patients are on a walker approximately 2 weeks, a cane 1-2 weeks and walking without any assistance between 4-6 weeks
- I do have patients that walk into clinic for their first postoperative appointment at 2 weeks with no cane or walker...it just depends on your pain tolerance and recovery.

### **EXERCISE – the most important thing after knee replacement is Gaining motion! Those who do not regain motion will develop scar tissue and likely be painful forever**

- Following surgery 4 main goals exist:
  - 1. Regain full knee extension **\*\*the most important\*\***
  - 2. Quadriceps contraction and activation
  - 3. Control of pain and swelling.
  - 4. Maintain patellar mobility
- To help gain full knee extension, place a small rolled up towel under your ankle and push the back of your knee toward the floor by contracting your quadriceps muscle.
  - **NEVER place towels or pillows under the knee or allow the knee to rest slightly flexed**
- DO NOT put pillows under the knee while you sleep. This can lead to a

Dr. Colten Luedke, Orthopaedic Surgery - (979) 776-0169

[www.BCSortho.com](http://www.BCSortho.com)

[www.DRCLuedke.com](http://www.DRCLuedke.com)



flexion contracture. Instead, place the pillows under your heel to ensure full knee extension.

- Elevate your leg for several days if you are sitting to help with swelling.
- Being up and around after surgery will help diminish the risk of blood clots.
- Therapy is a key aspect of recovery and should start within 1-2 days after surgery.

## **SLEEP**

- Nighttime will probably be the most uncomfortable time. Taking pain medication and icing just before going to sleep will help.
- If you need additional assistance in getting to sleep take a capsule of Benadryl 25mg 30-60 minutes prior to bedtime

## **COLD THERAPY**

- Ice or cryo-cuff (if you are given one) should be used for comfort and swelling. Use it at least 30 minutes at a time. Many patients use it an hour on then an hour off while awake for the first 2-3 days.
- Never apply directly to exposed skin. Place a dishtowel or t-shirt between your skin and the ice or cryo-cuff.
- A simple bag of frozen peas may be used as an inexpensive ice pack. Buy several bags of peas, place in a gallon size zip-lock bag making them about an inch thick and removing as much air as possible. Return to freezer, lying flat after you have finished.

## **BRUISING**

- The lower leg may become swollen and bruised, which is normal. This is from the fluid and blood from the knee moving down the leg and should resolve in 10- 14 days.
- If you experience severe calf pain and swelling, call the office immediately.

## **Therapy**

- Therapy will be arranged for you while in the hospital
  - We will arrange either home health therapy 3 times weekly x 3 weeks or outpatient therapy for you to attend 3 times weekly



**BCSortho.com DRCL**

- You will likely need therapy for 8-12 weeks depending on your recovery.

**EMERGENCIES** • If you have an emergency contact Dr. Luedke's office at (979) 776-0169 and he will be contacted.

- Contact the office if you notice any of the following:
  - Uncontrolled nausea or vomiting
  - reaction to medication
  - inability to urinate
  - fever greater than 101.5 (low grade fevers 1-2 days after surgery is normal)
  - severe pain not relieved by pain medication/ice/elevation of leg
  - redness or continued drainage around incisions (a small amount is normal for a few days)
  - calf pain or severe swelling.
- **If you are having chest pain or difficulty breathing, call 911 or go to the closest emergency room.**

## **DRIVING**

- You may drive when off all narcotics
- If your right knee is the operative side, you may not drive for 6 weeks.
- You must be able to brake firmly and comfortably.
- If you had a left knee replacement, you can drive right away as long as you are NOT taking the narcotic pain medication

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the office.

Dr. Colten Luedke, Orthopaedic Surgery -(979) 776-0169

[www.BCSortho.com](http://www.BCSortho.com)

[www.DRCLuedke.com](http://www.DRCLuedke.com)