

Lower Extremity Surgery

Discharge Instructions

Paul G. Kiritsis, M.D.

Please take the time to review the following instructions before you leave the hospital and use them as guidelines during your recovery from surgery. If you have any questions you may contact my office at (804) 379-2414.

Wound Care/Dressing Changes:

_____ You may change your dressing as needed. Beginning the 2 days after you are discharged from the hospital you should change your dressing daily. A big, bulky dressing isn't necessary as long as there isn't any drainage from the incisions. You can put a band-aid or a piece of gauze over each incision and wear an ACE bandage as needed for comfort and swelling. It isn't necessary to apply antibiotic ointment to your incisions. Sutures will be removed at your one week post-op visit. Staples (if you have them) are removed in two weeks. If you have steri-strips over your incision they will start to peel off in 7-10 days as you get them wet. They don't need to be removed prior to that. When they begin to peel off you can remove them. They should all be removed by 14 days from you surgery.

_____ Don't remove your dressings or get them wet.

Showering/Bathing:

_____ You may **shower 2 days after surgery**. You may shower if there is no drainage from your incisions. Your dressing may be removed for showering. You may get your incisions wet in the shower. Don't vigorously scrub the area where your incisions are. Apply a clean, dry dressing after drying off the area of your incisions. Don't take a tub bath, get in a swimming pool or Jacuzzi until the incisions are completely healed, which is about 14 days. **Do not soak your incisions under water.**

_____ Do not remove your dressings or get them wet until you are see at your follow-up appointment with Dr. Kiritsis. You will be given further instructions at that time.

Weight Bearing Status/Braces/Activity:

_____ You may walk as tolerated and perform your normal daily activities. Use crutches, a walker, or a cane only if you need them. You should strive to achieve full range of motion in your knee as soon as possible. Please start using a stationary bike or walking for exercise 3 or 4 days after surgery. We would like for you to return to your normal activities as soon as possible. If you feel comfortable returning to work, you may do so at any time.

_____ Weight bearing as tolerated with the brace locked in full extension. Use crutches, cane, or walker as needed for support. You may unlock the brace and bend your knee when you are not bearing weight on your leg. You should sleep in your brace with it locked straight.

_____ Non-weight bearing. Please do not bear any weight on your leg. You may use your toes for balance when walking with a cane or crutches.

Ice/Elevation:

Continue ice and elevation consistently for 48 hours after surgery. When elevating your knee elevate it on about 6-7 pillows to be sure it is above your heart. After 48 hours, you should ice your knee 3 times per day, for 20 minutes at a time for the next 5 days. After one week from surgery, you may use ice and elevation as needed for pain and swelling.

Diet:

You may advance to your regular diet as tolerated. Increase your clear liquid intake for the next 2 to 3 days.

Medication:

1. You will be given a prescription for pain medication when you are discharged from the hospital. Take the medication as needed according to the directions on the prescription bottle. Possible side effects of the medication include dizziness, headache, nausea, vomiting, constipation and urinary retention. If you experience any of these side effects call the office so that we can assist you in relieving them. Discontinue the use of the pain medication if you develop itching, rash, shortness of breath or difficulties swallowing. If these symptoms become severe or aren't relieved by discontinuing the medication you should seek immediate medical attention.

Refills of pain medication are authorized during office hours only. (8AM–5 PM Mon. thru Fri).

2. If you were prescribed Percocet/oxycodone or Dilaudid/hydromorphone you must have a written prescription. These medications legally cannot be called in to a pharmacy.

3. You may take over the counter Ibuprofen/Advil/Aleve between dosages of your pain medication if needed. Do not take Tylenol in addition to your pain medication as most of the pain medication already contains Tylenol. Do not exceed 4000mg of Tylenol per day. Ex: (hydrocodone 5/500mg = 500 mg of Tylenol)

4. You should take one Aspirin 325 MG. daily for ten days from the date of your surgery. This will help to prevent blood clots from forming in your legs.

4. You may resume the medication you were taking prior to your surgery. Pain medication may change the effects of any antidepressant medication. If you have any questions about possible interactions between your regular medications and the pain

medication you should consult the physician who prescribes your regular medications.

Follow Up Appointment:

Please call 379-2414 for a follow appointment with Dr. Kiritsis _____ from the time of your surgery. Please let our operator know you are scheduling a post-op appointment.

Physical Therapy:

_____ Physical therapy will be discussed with you at your first follow-up appointment with Dr. Kiritsis. You don't need to begin physical therapy prior to that visit.

_____ If you already have a therapy appointment, please be sure to attend your sessions as scheduled. If you do not have physical therapy scheduled, please call Dr. Kiritsis' office to set up your first appointment as soon as possible.

Important signs and symptoms:

If any of the following signs and symptoms occur, you should contact Dr. Kiritsis' office. Please be advised if a problem arises which you feel requires immediate medical attention or you are unable to contact Dr. Kiritsis' office you should seek immediate medical attention at the emergency department or other health care facility you have access to.

Signs and symptoms to watch for include:

1. A sudden increase in swelling and /or redness or warmth at the area your surgery was performed **which isn't relieved by rest, ice and elevation.**
2. Oral temperature greater than 101 degrees for 12 hours or more which isn't relieved by an increase in fluid intake and taking two Tylenol every 4-6 hours. Do not exceed 4000mg of Tylenol per day.
3. Excessive drainage from your incisions or drainage that hasn't stopped by 72 hours.
4. Calf pain, tenderness, redness or swelling which isn't relieved with rest and elevation.
5. Fever, chills, shortness of breath, chest pain, nausea, vomiting or other signs and symptoms which are of concern to you.

Other Instructions:
