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NHS Grampian

After your knee arthroscopy

Information for patients and carers

Day Case Unit
Dr Gray's Hospital, Elgin

Anaesthetic

You have had a general anaesthetic.

For 24 hours after a general anaesthetic you are strongly advised:

- **Not to drink alcohol or take any drugs unless prescribed by your doctor or the hospital**
- **Not to drive or cycle**
- **Not to operate appliances including kitchen equipment**
- **Not to smoke**
- **Not to sign any legal documents or make important decisions**

A responsible adult must stay with you for 24 hours.

After your operation

When you have a painful knee, the muscles above the knee at the front of your thigh can become wasted from lack of use. This can cause your knee to become weaker. It is very important to keep doing the quadriceps exercises that we've shown you.

Restrict your activity for the first few days after surgery to help prevent your knee from becoming excessively swollen. Some swelling is to be expected.

When resting, sit with your feet raised (so that your feet are higher than your hips). Use a footstool when sitting or put pillows under your legs when in bed.

Pain relief

You may have mild to moderate discomfort in your knee(s). We've given you a supply of painkillers to take home with you. You may need to take these regularly for the first 24 to 48 hours. Please follow the instructions on the bottle/box. After this time, the discomfort should be less, so you should not need so many painkillers.

Do not drink alcohol at the same time as taking these painkillers.

Reducing any swelling

To help your recovery, it is important to try and keep any swelling to a minimum.

You can apply an ice-pack (pack of frozen peas, wrapped inside a damp towel) to your knee for 10 minutes to help reduce the swelling. Always place the damp towel between your skin and the ice-pack to prevent a cold burn. Repeat 3 to 4 times daily.

Raising your leg when resting can also help reduce swelling. Keep your foot higher than your hip.

Wounds and dressings

You will have a large cotton wool and crepe bandage dressing on your knee when you first waken up from the anaesthetic. You can remove this yourself 48 hours after your surgery unless your surgeon has advised you otherwise.

We will give you a supply of dressings to take home so you can change them as required. We will advise you how to do this before you leave hospital.

You can have a shower while the stitches are in place. Some wounds have dissolving stitches which will not need to be removed.

If you have non-dissolving stitches, these will be removed 10 days after surgery, either at your outpatient clinic appointment or you can make an appointment with the practice nurse at your GP practice.

Returning to your usual activities

Walking

Try to bear your weight on your operated leg, unaided, immediately after surgery (unless otherwise advised). This will encourage a quicker return to normal activities.

Avoid heavy lifting, deep bending and twisting activities for the first 2 weeks to reduce stress on your knee.

Sport

Return to sport varies, so please discuss this with your consultant at your outpatient appointment.

You should be able to carry out your exercises easily and pain-free before returning to sport.

Work

If your job requires you to be on your feet for much of the time, then you will probably need to take 7 to 10 days off.

If you have a job that involves mostly sitting, then you should be able to return to work in a few days' time.

Kneeling will be uncomfortable for 6 to 8 weeks due to your wounds. If you are unsure, ask your consultant or GP for advice.

Driving

We recommend that you do not drive for the first 7 to 10 days after your operation. **Remember:** Your car insurance may not be valid if you drive while unfit. Check with your insurance company if you are unsure.

Is there anything I should watch out for?

Complications are unusual after this type of surgery, but if you have any of the following please contact the ward for advice:

- bleeding from the wound
- unable to control pain
- excessive swelling of the knee

Contact telephone numbers

If you need more information, or are unsure about any aspect of your care, you can contact the ward at any time up to 24 hours after you leave hospital. After this time, you should contact your GP or NHS 24.

Day Case Unit
Dr Gray's Hospital
☎ (01343) 567428
Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm

If calling outwith the above hours, call

Ward 6
Dr Gray's Hospital
☎ (01343) 567553

or
NHS 24
☎ 111

This leaflet is also available in large print.

Other formats can be supplied on request. Please call Quality Development on 01224 554149 for a copy. Ask for leaflet 1193.

Feedback from the public helped us to develop this leaflet. If you have any comments on how we can improve it, please call 01224 554149 to let us know.

Day Case Unit
Dr Gray's Hospital
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