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Post-op Instructions for Quadriceps Tendon Repair

These instructions are to compliment the information given by the nursing staff and physical therapist. They cover many of the common questions.

WOUND CARE

Dressings are to be kept clean and dry. A small amount of clear drainage or bleeding is normal. You may loosen the ace bandage if it feels tight. Dressings may be changed 3 days after surgery. Once the dressing has been removed you may shower avoiding any scrubbing of the incisions. Simply let the water run over your knee and gently pad dry with a clean towel. Keep covered with a 4x4 gauze and tape until your follow up appointment. If there is a mesh covering over your incision, leave that on for 3 weeks after surgery.

If purulent drainage (thick white or greenish in color) is coming from the wound, or the wound has increasing redness, or if you are having a temperature of 101 or higher, please report these symptoms to your surgeon or the doctor on call.

Never, ever remove your own stitches or trim what may appear to be excess suture material. We will remove your stitches in the office at your post-op appointment. If you are concerned about your stitches or if they are bothering you, please call us.

PAIN & SWELLING

Ice your knee as frequently as possible with the cooling apparatus. This will help with the pain and swelling.

Narcotic pain medication will be prescribed for use after you leave the hospital. Try to wean down as tolerated. These medications can cause constipation and you may want to use an over the counter stool softener. Tylenol products may be used instead of the prescribed pain medication. The prescribed narcotic medications should not be taken at the same time as plain Tylenol. You may supplement your pain medication by using Ibuprofen or Aleve for any breakthrough pain. It can help to stagger your pain medication with Ibuprofen or Aleve as needed. If a refill of pain medication is needed, please call the office during regular business hours, Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. In general, refills will not be made after hours or on weekends, so please plan ahead.

Swelling to some degree is common after surgery. To reduce swelling, elevation is very helpful. Elevate the knee above the heart level ("toes above the nose") for the first 2-5 days after surgery. Elevation for 30 minutes every 2 hours is a good initial recommendation. Moving your ankles up and down on a regular basis helps circulate blood from your legs to reduce swelling. Excessive pain and swelling should be reported to your surgeon.

DRIVING

To drive you must no longer be taking narcotic pain pills (plain Tylenol is allowed). Also, you must feel strong and alert. You may unlock the brace to allow for flexion of the knee while driving. Most people are able to start driving 1-2 weeks after surgery.



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EXERCISES

A hinged post-op brace is required following surgery. You cannot put weight on the surgical leg with the brace locked in extension. Your brace should be left on at all times. If for some reason the brace slips down or the dressing is too tight, carefully open the brace and readjust it, or release the tension of the ace bandage. Keep the brace on and locked when up on crutches and sleeping, and when doing your exercises.

Your brace will be set at 0 degrees of flexion. The brace should be left in this position at all times. Typically at 6-8 weeks following surgery we will have the therapist begin bending your knee.

The following exercises should begin the day after surgery and are designed to increase strength of the knee. They should be done lying down on a firm surface and your brace should be on. Your goal is to achieve 25 repetitions 4 times a day for the first 3-4 weeks after surgery.

- a. QUAD SETS - straighten the knee by tightening the quad (front thigh muscle), flexing the ankle (point toes to the ceiling), and pushing the back of the knee into the floor. Hold for the count of 5-10.
- b. STRAIGHT LEG RAISES - while maintaining the tightened quad position, slowly raise the straightened leg off the floor and hold for 5-10 seconds.
- c. VIGOROUS FOOT, ANKLE AND TOE MOVEMENT - 20 pumps per waking hour.

FOLLOW-UP

Make sure an appointment has been scheduled for you at Chippewa Valley Orthopedics & Sports Medicine for approximately 2 weeks after surgery.

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