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Sports Medicine, Knee, Shoulder and Elbow Surgery
203-407-3518

Instructions For:
Total Knee Replacement

Prior to Surgery

We require pre-admission testing by your family physician within 30 days prior to surgery. We must have the results in our office at a minimum 10 business days before surgery. Fax number 203-407-3558, attention Regina.

On the day prior to surgery, Yale New Haven Hospital or St. Raphael's Campus will contact you to let you know the arrival time for your surgery. This is may be several hours prior to surgery, in order to admit you, shave your knee before surgery, etc.

Bring a book or something to entertain yourself while you wait as it is sometimes a long wait.

****Please do not shave yourself, as this may increase bacterial growth on your skin.****

Day of Surgery

It is a good idea to wear loose fitting pants to the hospital. Your family may wait with you until you are taken to the holding area. I will see you prior to the procedure, answer any questions, and place my initials on the correct knee.

I will find your family members / friends in the waiting room after surgery. They will be able to see you there within one hour of the surgery in most cases.

After Surgery

In the operating room, your knee will be lightly bandaged and an ice pack will be applied. You will remain in the hospital for one to three nights in most cases. If you are going to stay at a rehab center, they will arrange this in the hospital. You may call a preferred site to arrange this in advance.

You will see a therapist several times in the hospital to start working on ambulation and range of motion.

It is YOUR job to work on STRAIGHTENING YOUR KNEE AFTER SURGERY. WHEN YOU ARE IN BED, PLACE A BLANKET OR TOWEL UNDER YOUR HEEL AND PUSH THE BACK OF YOUR KNEE INTO THE BED. HOLD FOR 10 SECONDS AND REPEAT TEN TIMES EVERY HOUR. THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT AS YOUR KNEE WILL BE MOST COMFORTABLE IN A SLIGHTLY BENT POSITION.

You should also pump your ankle up and down as much as possible to keep blood flowing in your legs and prevent blood clots.

Usually, you will leave for rehab 3 days post-op. You will stay 1-2 weeks.

The rehab staff will arrange for home PT once you are discharged from rehab. When you are able to get to outpatient rehab at STAR PT, you should begin this.

It is important for you to also be doing your exercises on your own three to four times daily to help regain the range of motion of your knee.

You will be on Coumadin (a blood thinner) for up to 6 weeks after surgery to help prevent blood clots. Your blood will be drawn 2x/week when you are home to check how thin your blood is (INR level). Usually this occurs on Mondays and Thursdays. Regina will then call you to let you know how much Coumadin to take.

One nutrient that can lessen Coumadin's effectiveness is Vitamin K. It's important to be consistent in how much Vitamin K you get daily. The adequate intake level of Vitamin K for adult men is 120 micrograms (mcg). For adult women, it's 90 mcg. While eating small amounts of foods that are rich in Vitamin K shouldn't cause a problem, avoid eating or drinking large amounts of:

- Kale, Spinach, Brussels sprouts, Parsley, Collard greens, Mustard greens, Chard**
- Avocados are high in vitamin K, although the amount varies from avocado to avocado. Vitamin K content in guacamole can vary by as much as 40 times. Because avocados can unpredictably affect the PT/INR, it may be best to avoid them.**
- Although dried basil, thyme and oregano contain high levels of vitamin K, a teaspoon of these herbs in their fresh form contain only a small amount and can be used.**
- Store-bought margarine contains unknown amounts of various vegetable oils. As a result, the amount of vitamin K in these foods is unpredictable. Use small amounts of butter instead of margarine.**

- Store-bought mayonnaise also contains unknown amounts of various vegetable oils and therefore has an unpredictable vitamin K content. Mayonnaise should be homemade with oils that are lower in vitamin K. If store-bought products are used, they should be the “light” variety with only small portions consumed (such as no more than several teaspoons).
- For the same reasons as with margarine and mayonnaise, be cautious of store-bought salad dressings. Homemade dressings are preferred.
- Watch out for foods normally low in vitamin K but packed in oil such as tuna fish, especially when the type of oil is unknown. It is best to use canned items packed in water.
- Exposing oils to sunlight or fluorescent light destroys about 85% of vitamin K. Expose high vitamin K oils to light for at least 48 hours by placing them in a transparent container in the sunlight. Do not open the container to the air because oxygen will cause the oil to oxidize.
- The vitamin K content of food is not altered by cooking or gamma irradiation.
- Remember that some daily multi-vitamins contain vitamin K. Check all vitamins you take carefully. Inform your doctor if your daily vitamin contains vitamin K, and the amount that it contains.
- Vitamins A, E and possibly C may also affect how your Coumadin works. However, the amounts usually present in a daily multi-vitamin are not a problem. Discuss taking vitamin supplements beyond a multi-vitamin with your healthcare provider.

Certain drinks can increase the effect of warfarin, leading to bleeding problems. Avoid or drink only small amounts of these drinks when taking warfarin:

- Cranberry juice or Green Tea
- Do not eat grapefruit or drink grapefruit juice. Grapefruit and grapefruit juice decrease the body’s ability to metabolize Coumadin.
- Alcohol can change your response to Coumadin.

Please do not use any ointments or creams on the incision. You may wet the incision (but not submerge it) once the staples are removed.

The rehabilitation center will arrange for your follow-up appointment. If you are unsure about this, please call. I like to see you 3-4 weeks after surgery in the office. Your staples will be removed at 10-14 days after surgery and steri-strips will be applied. By then I expect your knee to get fully straight and to bend to at least 90 degrees. Work hard!

Please feel free to call our office with any questions or concerns. Good luck and speedy recovery!!