

Greater Hartford Orthopedic Group, P.C.

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Post-Operative Instructions: Knee Reconstruction/Repair

What to Expect

In the first 24 Hours:

Following your knee reconstruction/repair, you will leave the hospital or surgery center in a knee immobilizer. This brace is meant to keep your leg fully extended during the immediate post-operative period. Under the knee immobilizer will be an ice pack, called a cryo-cuff. You may leave the brace and the cryo-cuff on for the first 24 hours. You will also leaving the hospital/surgery center with crutches. It is recommended for the first day or two that you use crutches for getting around. After surgery, most patients will be given two prescriptions- one is an antibiotic and one is a pain medication. The antibiotic will be taken for the first 48 hours following surgery. The pain medication may be started immediately following surgery. Some patients may have pain medication administered by an anesthesiologist prior to the surgery called a “nerve block”. The nerve block serves as a temporary pain reliever following surgery. The block usually wears off within 12 hours. It is advisable to take the pain medication even if you did have a block, so you will be comfortable throughout the night. For the first day, you want to try and stay off your leg. Keep the leg elevated on a few pillows so it is at least equal to, or above, the level of your heart.

The Next Day:

One of the most important goals for the first few days following surgery is to control the swelling. With a knee reconstruction/repair, there is a fair amount of swelling to the knee, lower leg, and ankle. It is very important to keep ice on your knee post-operatively until the swelling goes down. The general rule is to ice the knee for 20-30 minutes every 1-2 hours for the first 3 to 4 days. Do not be alarmed if the knee remains swollen for the first three days despite icing. It is okay to move the ankle, by pointing the ankle up, down, and in circles. This will help keep the swelling to a minimum in the lower leg and ankle. Feel free to undo the straps on the brace for icing purposes or comfort. It is okay to remove the knee brace while resting or laying down. The brace is meant for protection, so it is important to wear while trying to go from one room to the next. You will receive a call from Dr. Kimmel or his physician’s assistant the day following surgery to review the operative findings and to check on how you are doing. All questions or concerns that are not addressed here can be answered at that time.

The First Week:

You will be seen for your first post-operative visit within the first 3-5 days following surgery. At your visit, your brace and dressings will be taken down so we can check your incisions. The bandage will be replaced by large band aids to cover the incisions. The stitches will be in for 10-12 days from the time of surgery. An x-ray will be taken at your visit and Dr. Kimmel or his physician assistant will share your arthroscopic pictures with you from the surgery. You will be shown some preliminary exercises to do to get your muscles firing again. You will also be given a prescription to see a physical therapist at your visit. Physical therapy is generally twice a week. Please visit www.ctortho.com To find the appropriate rehab protocol.