



## **LOWER EXTREMITY POST-OP INSTRUCTIONS**

### **DR. MICHAEL B. ELLMAN**

Please follow these instructions carefully. If you have any questions, please contact a member of Dr. Ellman's team at 303-233-1223; ext 6134.

#### **FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENT**

We would like to see you for a post-operative visit at:

- Two weeks
- Six weeks
- Twelve weeks

#### **DRESSING CHANGES**

You will be provided with dressing change materials and instructions prior to discharge.

- Change your dressings every other day starting 5 days following surgery.
- The steri-stips (white tapes) will be removed at your post op appointment. If they fall off during a dressing change simply keep the area clean and covered with your dressings
- DO NOT apply ointment over incisions
- DO NOT soak incisions in a bathtub or hot tub. You may shower starting 3-5 days after surgery. Try to avoid getting wound wet for the first 7 days after surgery. When showering, let water run over the incisions but do not scrub the incisions with soap.

At each dressing change, evaluate the incision for drainage, redness surrounding the incision or red streaks. These combined with increasing pain and fever (Temp greater than 101 degrees) can be signs of infection – please notify our office right away.

#### **SUTURES**

Dissolvable sutures were used during your surgery. They will dissolve under the skin. Please keep your wounds clean and dry by following the instructions below regarding dressing changes.

#### **SWELLING**

Please elevate your lower extremity whenever possible. Elevation means the operative region is higher than your heart. For the first two weeks please keep the injured leg elevated as much as possible. This will decrease swelling, decrease pain, and aid in healing.

#### **ICE**

Ice your operative site 5-6 times a day, 20 minutes at a time. Do not apply ice packs directly over skin (place thin sheet on knee under ice)



### **TED STOCKINGS**

TED stockings are to be worn for the first two weeks after surgery. They aid in controlling lower extremity swelling and decrease the chances of blood clot formation. You may remove them to shower, but please wear them at all times the first two weeks after surgery.

Symptoms of a blood clot (DVT) include cramping, possible swelling in the calf or behind the knee, and redness of the calf. Please call the office immediately if these symptoms develop.

### **DIET**

You may eat a regular diet following your surgery. Please drink plenty of non-alcoholic, non-caffeinated beverages. Please do not consume alcohol with your pain medications.

### **MEDICATIONS**

Use as directed on the label. All medications should be taken with food. Do not mix with alcohol or drive while you are taking narcotics.

Constipation may occur when taking oral pain medications. Please increase your water intake while taking these medications. If you are experiencing discomfort due to constipation, you may take an over the counter stool softener (Colace, Mirolax, etc).

We often prescribe narcotic pain medications to aid in controlling post operative pain – such as Oxycontin, Oxycodone, or Norco. These medications will not alleviate all your discomfort, but should help manage pain along with elevation of your extremity and icing. Please take medications as instructed.

Most narcotics by law can NOT be called into a pharmacy but instead require a written prescription. Please monitor the amount of pain medications you have in order not to run out of medications.

**Please note:** Narcotics are highly addictive pain medications that can create side effects such as constipation and lethargy. Many narcotics, such as Percocet and Vicodin, also contain acetaminophen (Tylenol), which if taken in increasing doses can cause liver failure and even death. All narcotic pain medications are highly addictive and must be used with caution because they cause tolerance whereby the body adapts to them and, in order to achieve pain relief, the body requires increasing doses.

Pain medications will only be refilled in the post-operative period.

**It is the strict policy of this office that narcotics and other pain medications will NOT be refilled on weekends or after hours.**

### **Aspirin:**

You will be prescribed a blood thinner after surgery. If an injectable blood thinner is necessary following surgery (ie. Lovenox), the nurses on the floor will instruct you on how to administer this medication.



We prefer you to avoid anti-inflammatory medications for 6 weeks following surgery as they may inhibit healing

**PHYSICAL THERAPY**

You may be given a specific physical therapy rehabilitation program to help maximize your recovery and surgical outcomes. Physical Therapy protocols have been developed by Dr. Ellman to provide the best surgical outcome possible. When you get this prescription, please schedule an appointment to see a therapist within ONE week from your surgical date.

Questions about your Physical Therapy protocol can be addressed by your physical therapist. If you have any questions about the protocol, please contact your therapist or our office.