

Total Knee Arthroplasty/Uni Knee Arthroplasty
Post Operative Care Instructions
Dr. Tarlow – Advanced Knee Care, PC

You will go home 1-4 days after surgery with an ace wrap on your knee, and a walker/crutches. You will be sent home with a narcotic pain reliever. If you experience nausea/vomiting for more than 24 hours after surgery it is likely due to the pain reliever. Phone our office for a new prescription. Please phone during business hours for prescription refills. Prescriptions will not be filled after hours or on weekends.

Activities: Limited for 72 hours after surgery, be sure to rest. Do not drive, operate machinery or power tools, drink alcohol or make important decisions or sign legal documents due to surgery and general anesthesia. Elevate foot and leg (“ankle higher than heart”) for 3-7 days. Flex foot and ankle to decrease swelling. There will be more swelling than you anticipate.

Shower: Remove dressings (Leave steri strips or staples in place), wash knee incisions, dry incisions and apply dry gauze/tape and ace *48 hours after surgery.*

Follow-up appointment: Usually scheduled for 7-10 days after surgery. Call our office (480-483-0393) if you are unsure of your appointment time.

Crutches/Walker: Full weight bearing for 1-4 weeks after surgery, shorter time for MIS surgery, longer time for traditional total knee. Switch to cane when able, then walk freely.

CPM: Use 2 hours twice daily. Increase degrees of motion on CPM as tolerated. Call to return machine when until able to spin pedals completely around on stationary bike

Brace: Not routinely used after TKA.

Exercises: SLR (straight leg raises) and knee range of motion (ROM) 25 reps twice daily beginning immediately postop. No pillow behind knee, only under calf or heel. Start exercise bike 1-2 weeks postop for 15 minutes. Return to normal activities expected 4-12 weeks.

Ice: Ice knee/lower leg for 20 minutes three times daily for 2 weeks.

Swelling and bleeding: Swelling and light bleeding is normal. Lower leg /foot/ankle may turn greenish/yellow with black stripes around ankle from the blood traveling under skin and down leg 3-14 days after surgery. Lower leg throbbing on standing also can occur. This is normal. Your leg swelling will be more than you anticipate, will maximize 7-14 days after surgery.

Physical therapy: A complete and speedy recovery is dependent on attending formal physical therapy. First appointment should be scheduled about a week after surgery.

Driving: May drive as long as narcotic pain relievers are not being used. Usually 1-3 weeks.

Off work: If applicable, Return to work range is 3 weeks -3 months.

Permanent Limitations: Limit walking to a few miles per day. Limit lifting to 100 #. No running or jumping. Okay to try kneeling. Total recovery 1 year, (arthritis pain resolved 1 week – 3 months). Limit walking for the first month after traditional TKA. Usually no need to limit walking after MIS Knee unless excessive leg/ankle/foot swelling.

Body Changes: Your appetite may be poor due to surgery, fatigue, anemia (ask your pharmacist for iron and vitamin recommendations – use for a month) and narcotic pain medication. You may have trouble sleeping for 2-3 months. Call for prescription medication if needed. Narcotic medication promotes constipation – use stool softeners and laxatives. (Dulcolax suppositories, Metamucil, Milk of Magnesium).

For more comprehensive instructions go to tarlowknee.com/post-op-instruct/ and open file – Preparing for knee replacement surgery.

If you experience the following symptoms call our office as soon as possible (480 483-0393). These may be signs of infection or deep venous thrombosis.

- Severe pain with fever greater than 102 F.
- Limited knee range of motion.
- Calf or thigh pain that is consistent and does not go away.
- Trouble/pain with breathing/chest pain/shortness of breath.

Phone/Answering Service: 480-483-0393

Website: www.tarlowknee.com

Blog: www.tarlowmd.blogspot.com

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