WOUND CARE:

- After surgery, wounds are typically covered with gauze, cotton padding and tape. This should be left in place for 2 days. After this, dressings may be removed and waterproof Band-Aids should be placed over the incision sites. Leave any steri-strips (adhesive paper strips over the incision) in place.
- There may be stitches or staples visible when changing dressings. These should be left in place until removed in clinic.
- You may shower once the initial dressing is removed with the waterproof Band-Aids in place. Do not submerge the wounds in water (bathtub, pool, lake) for at least 2 weeks after surgery.
- Because of the fluid used to inflate the knee during surgery, some drainage is expected. If the dressings become saturated or drainage continues beyond the first few days, call the office.

ICING:

- Icing is an important part of recovery from surgery. It is used to decrease swelling and inflammation.
- An ice machine is often offered to patients to use after surgery. If you have chosen to purchase this machine, it should be used continuously for approximately the first 48 hours after surgery.
- If you did not purchase the ice machine, you can substitute a bag of ice or frozen vegetables.
- After the first 48 hours, the unit should be used in 20 minute intervals every couple of hours for the first 3-4 weeks after surgery.
- Keeping your leg elevated above your heart will also help decrease swelling.

DIET:

- After surgery, some patients experience nausea. This can be related to anesthesia or pain medication. It is best to begin with clear liquids and light food (crackers). You may progress slowly to your normal diet if not nauseated.
- Patients are sometimes prescribed an anti-nausea medication after surgery. This can be used to treat nausea. If nausea or vomiting persists despite medication, call the office.
MEDICATION:

- Most home medications may be resumed the evening of surgery or the following day unless specifically directed by your surgeon.
- Typically, patients are given a prescription for pain medication. Please take this medication as instructed. Pain medication can be decreased as pain improves.
- Try to take pain medication with food to help decrease nausea.
- Some prescribed pain medication may already have Tylenol (Acetaminophen) mixed with it. Do not take any other medications that include Tylenol while taking these pain medications. Taking too much Tylenol can cause liver damage.
- Taking medication prior to bedtime may help with sleeping.
- Do not drink alcohol or drive while taking narcotic pain medication (hydrocodone, oxycodone, dilaudid, etc.).
- Pain medication typically takes about 30-45 minutes to take effect. Don’t wait until pain is severe to take pain medication.
- Some patients may receive a nerve block prior to surgery. This block lasts a different length of time in each patient, but typically lasts 12-18 hours. When you begin to feel some tingling in the extremity, the block is beginning to wear off. This is a good time to begin taking oral pain medication.
- Pain medication can also cause constipation. An over-the-counter laxative, high-fiber diet or fruit juice may be helpful.
- Pain medication will not take away all of your pain. It is okay to have some discomfort.
- Because of the risks of prolonged narcotic use, in most cases narcotic pain medication will not be prescribed after 6 weeks from surgery. Plan to wean narcotic use after surgery accordingly.
- Patients are also given a prescription for an anti-inflammatory medication (Naproxen) to help prevent a very specific problem after surgery called heterotopic ossification (H.O.). It is important to begin the medication the day after surgery and to continue it for 30 days after surgery to prevent this problem. If you have any problems taking the medication, call our office.

ACTIVITY:

- Crutches are used initially after surgery for protection.
- For the first 4-8 weeks after surgery, you may place partial weight on the operative leg (up to 50%).
- Your level of discomfort will most often be your best guide in determining how much activity is allowed. Remember that it is very easy to overdo in the first few days after surgery and any increase in pain or swelling usually indicates that you need to decrease your activities. Please be careful on slippery surfaces, steps, or anywhere you might fall and be injured.
- Do not resume sports, use exercise equipment or perform strenuous physical activity (including lifting weights) until your surgeon says it is okay.
- Return to work depends on your job requirements, specifics of your surgery and pain/swelling levels. This can be discussed at your follow-up appointment.
- Physical therapy is usually prescribed to begin within 1 week after surgery. This is an important part of your recovery and we encourage patients to attend all physical therapy appointments.
- Return to driving after surgery is okay once narcotic pain medication has been stopped and you are cleared by your surgeon. The length of time until patients are able to return to driving varies depending on the specific surgery and which leg is involved.
- Return to full sports activity is usually between 5-7 months after surgery. Timing of return to sports depends on several factors and will need to be discussed with your surgeon.

**BLOOD CLOT PREVENTION:**
- Though uncommon, blood clots (also called deep vein thrombosis or DVT) can occur after surgery. To decrease the risk of this problem, you should flex your ankle and toes up and down ten times per hour for the first 2-3 weeks after surgery.
- Elevation of the operative leg also helps decrease swelling and prevent blood clots.
- Patients are typically prescribed Aspirin 325 mg once daily for 3 weeks after surgery to help prevent blood clots.
- Be sure to let your surgeon know if you have a history of blood clots.

**REASONS TO CALL THE OFFICE:**
Please call the office for any of these concerns:
- Fever above 101.5°F
- Excess pain or swelling of the calf
- Excess drainage at surgical incisions
- Worsening pain in the operative leg not controlled with medication
- Excess nausea/vomiting
- Numbness in the operative leg
  - Some numbness can be expected initially after surgery if a nerve block was used
- Redness around the incision site
- Any other questions or concerns

**FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENT:**
- A post-operative follow-up appointment will be made for you at the time your surgery is scheduled for 2 weeks after surgery. If you do not have an appointment scheduled after surgery, please call our office.