

KNEE ARTHROSCOPY POST OP INFORMATION

Your surgery is finished and we now move onto the post operative phase of your recovery. These are the things you need to know and answers the most commonly asked questions.

After your surgery was finished I injected local anaesthetic both into the knee, and into your incisions. As a result most people only have mild pain when they wake up from surgery. The duration of effect of the anaesthetic is usually between 6 and 18 hours. When the anaesthetic wears off you may have a significant increase in your pain. For this reason, unless you have an allergy to the medication, I would like you to **take a 5mg endone tablet this evening before bed even if you do not have significant pain so that you don't wake up in the middle of the night with pain**. Also take one of these tablets when you wake up in the morning. After that, use this medication sparingly and only if you have significant pain that is not well controlled with your other medication. Common side effects of opioid medications include nausea and vomiting, constipation, itch, and drowsiness. You should not drive if you are taking these medications.

For the first 10 days post surgery I would recommend taking **regular paracetamol** (1 gram = 2 x 500mg tablets, every 4-6 hours) **and regular anti inflammatory** (either neurofen 400mg three times a day with food OR meloxicam 7.5mg twice a day with food if neurofen irritates your stomach). We will talk about ceasing these medications at your post op appointment depending on how you are recovering.

You can take the large bulky bandage and the wool underneath the bandage off your knee tomorrow. Underneath this are two small waterproof dressings. Leave these on until you see me for your post-operative appointment. You can shower once a day with these on but try not to get them too wet. You cannot swim or have a bath in the first 2 weeks. If they do fall off or get wet, contact my rooms and we can give you some more.

Deep vein thrombosis is rare post knee arthroscopy, but can happen. The main indicators of DVT are calf pain and swelling that is getting worse not better. If you have this let me know and I will arrange a USS. Small below knee DVTs typically do not require formal treatment. Clots that involve the vein behind the knee, or higher, require treatment with blood thinners for 3-6 months.

Most people do not require crutches after a knee arthroscopy as the surgery does not destabilize the knee in any way. On rare occasions, if the post operative pain is too significant, crutches may be used for a few days to facilitate easier mobility. Occasionally if cartilage grafting has been undertaken crutches may be a requirement of your early recovery.

You are allowed to **drive** once you can walk comfortably unaided, are no longer requiring opioid pain killers, and when you honestly believe your reaction time is back to normal. Usually this is between 5 days and 2 weeks post op.

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Do not do too much too soon after your knee arthroscopy. Even though the incisions are small I have opened the joint and manipulated structures inside your knee. If you do too much too soon after your operation the knee will remain sore and swollen for longer. Instead of you being happy with the knee after 4-6 weeks it will take 8-12 weeks to settle. I generally recommend rest, icing the knee and small walks only during the first 2 weeks. Using one of the neoprene/wetsuit compression garments that are available from most chemists for the first 6 weeks can help to control swelling.

Not all knee scopes recover the same way. Sometimes people have little or no pain, and other times the pain can be quite significant. The differences in recovery relate to how much work was done inside the knee, how accessible the pathology is inside the knee, post operative bleeds inside the knee (which can be very painful), how much underlying arthritis is present in the knee and different pain and inflammatory responses people have. If there is something that doesn't feel or seem right to you during your recovery please call the rooms and I will either call you back or arrange to see you in the short term. Don't worry, we'll get you through it!

See you for your post-op appointment.

Regards,
Luke McDermott.