

When can I drive?

We recommend that you do not drive until you are able to walk comfortably without a cane and are off all prescription pain medications. You must be able to get in and out of your car and move your right foot quickly from the gas to the brake. Most patients are ready to resume driving approximately three to six weeks after surgery. If there is any questioning if you are ready or not, wait until your follow-up visit at eight weeks.

When should I be concerned about the appearance of my wound?

After a total knee replacement, your knee will be slightly warm and swollen for many months. This is normal. Your staples or sutures should be ready to be removed approximately three weeks after surgery. There may be some increased redness around the stitch or staple as your skin reacts to the foreign material. This also is normal. If this redness increases or if your knee becomes redder, swollen, tender, or begins draining, you need to notify your surgeon immediately and come in for an office visit.

How much pain medication do I need?

Every patient is different and will require different amounts of pain medication. In general, it is good to be off all prescription pain medications two to three weeks after surgery. Often patients are able to use Acetaminophen (Tylenol) throughout the day after their discharge and take stronger prescription pain medication before therapy or at night to help them sleep. You will be given a limited amount of pain medication when you leave the hospital. If you find that your pain is not relieved by your medication, you need to call your surgeon and come in for an office visit.

What exercises should I do at home?

You will receive extensive therapy in the hospital. The exercises that you learn in the hospital you should continue at home. Your therapist will also give you a home therapy program before your discharge. We recommend you work on bending and straightening your knee along with your strengthening exercises a minimum of three times a day.

When can I shower?

You may shower after discharge if your wound is dry, without drainage. This is usually four to five days after surgery. Do not scrub your wound. Use regular soap and let the water run over your knee. After your staples or sutures are removed, we recommend you wait another 48 hours prior to showering. You should not soak your knee (e.g.: in a bathtub, lake, or hot tub) for six weeks after surgery.

When do I need to take antibiotics?

You now have an artificial joint, which is at risk for bacterial infection. Anytime you have a bacterial infection, it should be treated immediately with an appropriate antibiotic. Viral illnesses do not require antibiotics.

Antibiotics should be taken before any dental, genitourinary, or gastrointestinal procedures such as: dental cleanings, oral surgery, bladder scopes, urinary catheterizations, colonoscopy, and/or flexible sigmoidoscopy. If there is any question if you should take an antibiotic or not, it is always safer to do so. But, feel free to call The CORE Institute. The recommended antibiotic regimen is:

- Two grams of oral Amoxicillin one hour before a procedure

Penicillin allergic patients may take either two grams of Cephalexin or 600 mg of Clindamycin. A card outlining this is available.

How long do I need to wear my white stockings?

TED hose are compression stockings that we want you to wear for six weeks after surgery. They help the circulation in your legs and decrease your risk of forming blood clots (deep venous thromboses). You may take them off to shower and at night when you sleep. After six weeks, you are no longer required to wear them.

When will I see my surgeon for follow-up?

You will be given a card with The CORE Institute's phone number to call and arrange your follow-up. At three weeks you will see the Physician Assistant who assisted in your care during your hospital stay for a wound check and suture or staple removal. Your surgeon will be contacted if there are any concerns. At eight weeks postoperatively, you will be seen for radiographs and an exam by your surgeon. If you are doing well, you will then be seen at 16 weeks post-op with new radiographs by your surgeon or physician assistant. Some patients may require more frequent follow-up and this will be arranged.

When should I call the office?

Please call the office if:

- Your incision becomes more red, swollen or painful
- If there is any drainage from your wound
- If you find therapy more difficult, painful, or are unable to move your knee as much as your previous sessions
- If you develop lower leg pain, swelling or tenderness
- If you develop a fever greater than 101 degrees or shortness of breath
- You have a question or concern not answered above

Ongoing Care

A member of the surgical team would like to see you back two to three weeks after surgery for a wound check and staple/suture removal. At approximately eight and 16 weeks postoperatively, you will return for radiographs followed by an examination. If needed, your surgeon may ask you to return for a recheck at a time other than stated above. Each patient is an individual and may require a different follow-up schedule. Your first follow-up visit is usually arranged before surgery. If you did not receive an appointment or are unsure of your follow-up, please call our office.

Questions

The CORE Institute is dedicated to your outcome. If any questions or concerns arise, please call The CORE Institute at 1.866.974.2673.