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# EVANGELISTA ORTHOPEDIC CLINIC

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## TOTAL KNEE REPLACEMENT POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

- Your first meal after surgery should be light
- An ice bag may be applied to your knee. Swelling is very common after surgery. Please elevate your extremity to the level of your heart when swelling does occur. This will continue to be useful over the next few weeks
- Prescription for pain medications will be provided at discharge
- You may bend your knee as much as the dressing will allow
- It is also very important to obtain full extension of the leg, as this is a necessary element of a normal gait. A good way to encourage full extension after total knee replacement is to place a rolled towel under your heel, while laying down, and feel a stretch in the back of your leg.

Do this as often as possible over the next several weeks



- Physical therapy is an important aspect of your recovery. This process should begin as soon as possible and continue for a few months. If you are discharged home you should either go to outpatient physical therapy (our preferred option), or participate with home physical therapy by a home health agency
- You may remove the dressing and shower 72 hours after surgery. You may wash your incision gently with a mild anti-bacterial soap and water, pat dry, and apply a clean dressing. Do **not** use peroxide or alcohol to clean your incision. This should be repeated daily until your staples/sutures are removed. **Do not submerge** your incision underwater. Showers are good, but no pools, bathtubs, or hot tubs for at least 6 weeks after surgery
- Do not apply any creams or ointments to your incision sites
- Use a walker for security and support after your total knee replacement. You may weight bear as



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tolerated on your operative leg unless otherwise instructed. You will work with your physical therapist on when to discontinue the use of the walker

- If you develop a fever (101.5 degrees or above), severe pain, unexpected redness or swelling in your leg, calf pain, chest pain, or shortness of breath, please notify our office, or go directly to the ER
- Let pain and swelling be the guides to your level of activity: if your leg is much more swollen than the day before, you probably did too much
- Please contact our office to set up your first follow up appointment. It should be approximately two weeks after surgery. Your sutures/staples will be removed at this visit
- If you were started on medication to prevent blood clots, this should be continued for 6 weeks

**Note:** You should now be pre-medicated with antibiotics as a prophylactic to decrease your risk of infection prior to any invasive procedures including, but not limited to, dental cleanings or procedures, colonoscopies, endoscopies, or surgeries. These procedures can increase the amount of bacteria in your bloodstream. If the bacteria find their way to your total joint, they can cause a very serious infection that could require removal of your total joint. We are happy to provide you with prescriptions for antibiotics prior to your appointments. Please postpone any routine cleanings or procedures for at least 3 months following your surgery.

If you have any questions about these guidelines, your procedure or the rehabilitation process please do not hesitate to call us at **480-656-0291**



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