



Post Operative Instructions: Patella Fracture ORIF

ACTIVITY

- You may weight bear as tolerated with the brace locked in extension. You must use crutches to assist with walking.
- You may bend your knee 0-30 degrees while wearing your brace for exercises.
- Avoid using your quadriceps muscle when trying to straighten the knee in the brace. Use your hands and the other leg to help move your surgical leg and knee.
- Limit prolonged standing or walking for the first 5–7 days after surgery.
- Avoid long periods of sitting without elevating the leg and avoid long-distance travel for 2 weeks.
- Do not prop up a pillow under your knee. Instead, support your heel so gravity can help fully extend your knee, as shown in the picture below.

BRACE

- When walking or moving around, the knee brace must be on and locked
- Wear the brace while sleeping, locked in extension.
- When sitting or lying down while awake (reading, watching TV, etc.), you may loosen the Velcro straps or remove the brace.



DRESSING & INCISIONS

- A small amount of red-tinged drainage on the dressing during the first 2 days is normal.
- Keep the dressing clean and dry; protect it while bathing or showering.
- Remove the dressing 4 days after surgery.
- You may apply Band-Aids to the incisions or leave them open to air.
- Do not apply Bacitracin or other ointments.
- Avoid soaking in pools, lakes, hot tubs, or the ocean until sutures are removed and the incision is fully healed.

PAIN & INFLAMMATION

Ice

- Apply ice wrapped in a dry towel 20 minutes at a time, several times per day for the first week, then as needed.

Compression

- Use an ACE wrap or white stocking to reduce swelling.
- The white stocking should be worn for 5–7 days to help prevent blood clots and reduce knee swelling.

Elevation

- Keep your foot elevated above heart level as much as possible for the first 3–4 days.
- Place a pillow under your calf or foot, not under the knee.

Pain Medications

- Take your prescribed medications as directed.

Tylenol (Acetaminophen)

- First-line for pain.
- Take 1000 mg every 6–8 hours.
- Do not exceed 1000 mg per dose or 4000 mg per day (limit to 3000 mg/day if you have liver issues).
- Do not drink alcohol while taking Tylenol.

Oxycodone

- For moderate to severe breakthrough pain only.
- Use sparingly and wean off as soon as possible.

Common side effects include:

- Nausea: Take with food.
- Drowsiness: Do not drive or operate machinery.
- Itching: Benadryl may help.
- Constipation:
 - Use stool softeners (e.g., Senna-Docusate) or OTC options (Mineral Oil, Milk of Magnesia, etc).
 - Avoid bananas, rice, apples, toast, and yogurt (may worsen constipation).
 - Light walking helps stimulate bowel function.

Refills:

- If you think you will need a refill, you must request it during regular weekday office hours.
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DVT PROPHYLAXIS

- Take Aspirin 325 mg daily for 3 weeks after surgery.
 - This is not for pain—it's to reduce the risk of blood clots (DVT/pulmonary embolism).
 - If you already take aspirin or other blood thinners, make sure your surgeon knows, as your plan may need adjustment.
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EMERGENCIES

You must have someone stay with you during the first 48 hours after surgery.

Call the clinic or the on-call orthopedist if:

- Drainage soaks the dressing, increases, smells foul, or if incisions become red, warm, or very painful.
 - You develop a fever >101.5°F or chills.
 - You experience leg or calf pain, swelling, or difficulty breathing.
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FOLLOW-UP CARE

- Schedule a follow-up appointment at ~2 weeks postoperatively for a wound check, suture removal, and review of your surgery (if not already scheduled).
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EXERCISES

- When you feel ready, you may perform each exercise 2–3 times per day.
- It may help to take pain medication 20–30 minutes beforehand and apply ice afterward.

Ankle Pumps:

1. Point toes downward and hold for 5 seconds
2. Point toes upward and hold for 5 seconds

Perform 2-3 sets of 10

