



Post Operative Instructions: Total Knee Arthroplasty (TKA)

ACTIVITY

- You may use crutches or a walker for balance during the first few days, but you may put as much weight on your leg as is comfortable.
- You may bend and straighten your knee as much as you like.
- Avoid prolonged standing or walking for the first 7–10 days after surgery.

DRESSING & INCISION

- Your incision was closed with either staples or absorbable buried sutures, depending on your skin type.
- Keep your dressings (ACE wrap and soft dressings beneath) clean, dry, and in place for 7 days after surgery.
- On day 7, you may remove all of the dressings. You may then shower, pat soap onto the incision, and rinse off. Do not scrub the incision. No submerging or soaking (baths, pools, hot tubs, oceans, etc.) for at least one month postop, or until cleared by Dr. Williamson. After showering, pat dry and replace the ACE wrap for compression to reduce swelling.
- Monitor your incision daily and report any concerns promptly
- If your incision was closed with buried sutures and Dermabond (surgical glue), let the glue fall off on its own and do not scrub or pick it off. This may take a month.

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.

Methocarbamol

- Helps with pain and muscle spasms.
- Take every 6 hours as needed.

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.

DVT PROPHYLAXIS

- Take Aspirin 162 mg daily for 6 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.

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 $>101.5^{\circ}\text{F}$ or chills.
- You experience leg or calf pain, swelling, or difficulty breathing.

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).