

Novant Health Perry & Cook Orthopedics & Sports Medicine

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DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS & PHYSICAL THERAPY PROTOCOL FOR LOWER EXTREMITY SURGERY

Recovery after surgery entails controlling swelling and discomfort, healing, return of range-of-motion of the lower extremity, regaining strength in the muscles in the extremity, and a gradual return to activities. The following instructions are intended as a guide to help you achieve these individual goals and recover as quickly as possible after your surgery.

A. COMFORT:

- 1. Elevation** – Elevate your leg above the level of your heart. The best position is lying down with two pillows lengthwise under your entire leg. This should be done for the first several days after surgery.
- 2. Swelling** – Place crushed ice in a cloth covered plastic bag on the surgery site for no more than 20 minutes, three (3) times a day.
- 3. Medication** –
Pain Medication- Take medications as prescribed, but only as often as necessary. Avoid alcohol and driving if you are taking pain medication.
- 4. Driving** – Driving is NOT permitted until approved by the physician.

B. ACTIVITIES:

- 1. Range-of-Motion** – Move your leg through range of motion as tolerated.
Exercises – These help prevent complications such as blood clotting in your legs. Wiggle your toes. Thigh muscle tightening exercises should begin the day of surgery and should be done for 10 to 15 minutes, 3 times a day, for the first few weeks after surgery.
- 2. Weightbearing Status** – You are NOT allowed to put any of your weight on your operative leg. This will change as you begin therapy.
- 3. Physical Therapy** – PT may be part of your postoperative recovery plan. This will be discussed at your 1st postoperative visit.
- 4. Athletic Activities** – Athletic activities **should be avoided** until allowed by Dr. Romanowski.
- 5. Return to Work** – Return to work as soon as possible. Your ability to work depends on a number of factors – your level of discomfort and how much demand your job puts on your leg. If you have any questions, please call your doctor.

C. WOUND CARE:

- Swimming and soaking of the leg **should be avoided** until allowed by your doctor.
- You may shower after surgery provided that the splint or cast remains dry. Consider wrapping a plastic bag or other impervious material over the splint or cast. The splint/cast must remain dry.

D. EATING:

- Your first few meals, after surgery, should include light, easily digestible foods and plenty of liquids, since some people experience slight nausea as a temporary reaction to anesthesia.

E. CALL YOUR PHYSICIAN IF:

- Pain in your leg persists or worsens in the first few days after surgery.
- Excessive redness or drainage of cloudy or bloody material from the cast/splint
- You have a temperature elevation greater than 101°
- You have pain, swelling or redness in your calf or increased swelling in leg.
- You have numbness or weakness in your leg or foot.

F. RETURN TO THE OFFICE:

- Your first return to our office should be within the first 1-2 weeks after your surgery. Call Dr. Romanowski's office to make an appointment for this first post-operative visit.