



ORTHOPAEDIC
health group

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Knee Arthroscopy

The following information is designed to answer some frequently asked questions regarding what to expect and what to do after arthroscopic surgery. During the arthroscopic procedure the joint is irrigated with normal saline. There will typically be two or three small incisions. These will be stitched and sealed with waterproof dressings. Your knee will be wrapped with Velband and then covered with a bandage.

Fluid or blood may gradually leak through these incisions, spotting the waterproof dressings. This is common. The blood-tinged drainage may persist for 24 – 36 hours. If it has not significantly decreased by this time please call my office on 9885.7773.

A post-operative appointment will be given to you approximately 2 weeks after your surgery.

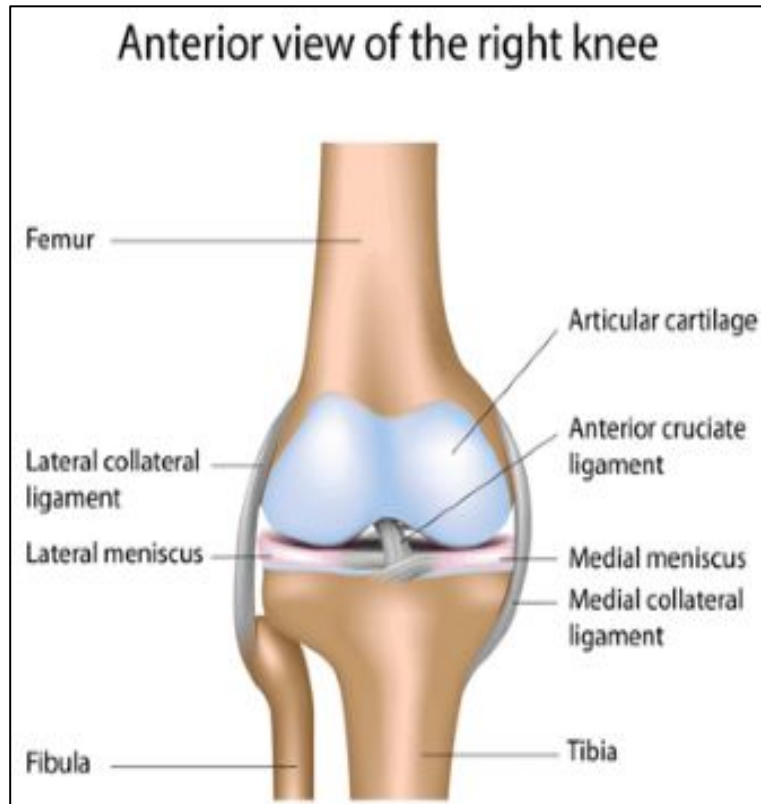
Common Post - operative questions

What do I do when I go home from the hospital?

After any surgery you may be tired and drowsy for approximately 24 – 48 hours. It is important that you rest and elevate your leg as much as possible.

Will I have swelling / redness, bruising or discharge following surgery?

It is not uncommon for the knee to remain slightly painful and swollen for several days or weeks but it may persist to some degree for months after a knee arthroscopy depending on the problem and the amount of surgery required. This will gradually subside but may be present for several days to weeks. Rest, using crutches, elevation, icing and wearing an elastic stocking (compression bandage) will help to reduce the swelling more rapidly.



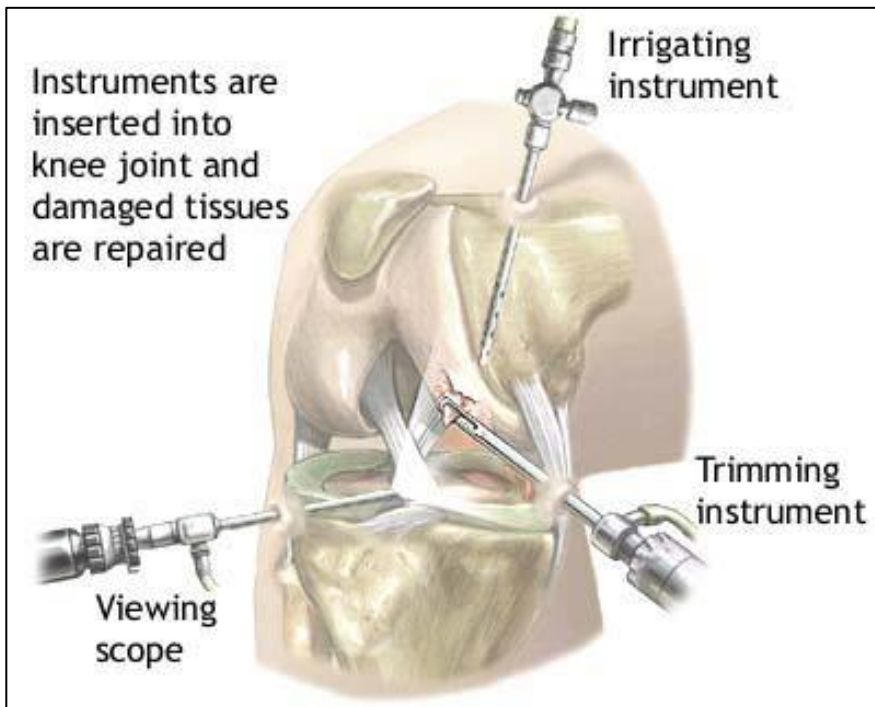


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Common Post-operative questions

It is not unusual to have some redness around the wound and some clear, yellow or blood tinged discharge. The crutches can be discontinued as pain and mobility allows.

To reduce pain and swelling, you should use ice and elevate the leg preferably above heart level. A pillow can be placed under the knee for the first few days. Ice can be used 20 minutes on at least 4 times a day for the first few days as well.



Ice therapy works better than oral pain medication. Discontinue the ice therapy when it no longer reduces discomfort however, once the bandages are removed ice will be more effective.

You should never place the ice directly on the skin as this can result in burns. You should endeavor to use a towel or cloth between the skin and ice to prevent any skin injury.

You may notice that the swelling worsens throughout the day due to the effect of gravity and activity. Sports including the gym should be avoided until you have returned for my review and I have given you clearance to do so. This will usually be between the 4-6 week mark post operative.



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Common Post-operative questions

How much pain will I be in after my surgery?

It is normal to have pain and swelling in your knee following the surgery. The swelling may last for 2 – 3 weeks however the pain is variable.

You will be given a prescription for pain medication. If you have any known drug allergies please notify the nurse prior to taking medication. Some medications do have side effects. If you have any difficulty with itching, nausea or other side effects discontinue the medication immediately and call my office. Pain medication often causes drowsiness and we advise that you do not drive, operate machinery or make important decisions while taking medication.

It is best to take the medications regularly (as prescribed) for the initial 48 hours. Within 2 – 3 days after your surgery, you can begin to cut back on your pain relief and take them only when experiencing pain.

We recommend also taking an anti-inflammatory (such as Ibuprofen or Nurofen if not contra-indicated) in conjunction with pain relief tablets like (Panadol Osteo) as this will assist in reducing your swelling significantly. You will also be given a script for stronger pain relief like Endone or Tramadol that you can take as required for break through pain relief or at night to help you sleep. It is important that you take the medications only as directed on the packet and also with food.

Acute pain however is normally relieved after the first 3-7 days after surgery. It is also normal to see some swelling and bruising up to your thigh or down to your calf and ankle. Take your oral medication as directed. If you experience severe pain and swelling or redness in your calf that persists please contact my office on 9885.7773.

It is also recommended that you take your pain medication at least 30 minutes before exercising. You should avoid drinking alcohol while taking your medication.

When can I return to work following my surgery?

You may return to an office-type job within a few days after simple arthroscopic surgery of the knee. The only restriction would be your own motivation and pain tolerance. If your job requires vigorous activities, or if you have to use public transport, then you must judge as to when you feel capable to return. You may go up and down stairs without injuring your knee but I recommend that you use a crutch / cane if you feel you need more support.



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Common Post-operative questions

When can I drive my car or fly?

As a general rule, you may resume driving as soon as you are comfortable after the surgery and walking without pain relief. However it is recommended that you don't fly for approximately 4 – 6 weeks because of the risk of DVT (blood clots).



When can I remove the dressings

It is important to keep your dressings clean and dry. The dressings applied in theatre can be removed on day 2 and the waterproof dressings are left intact. If these become untidy / soiled or wet then please remove them, completely dry the wound and replace. The dressings need to remain intact until your appointment for your post-operative appointment, as the wound needs to remain dry.

There may be some bloody spotting on the dressing initially; which is entirely normal. Should you experience excessive bleeding that soaks through the dressings please contact our office immediately.

You should avoid soaking your knee in a bath, pool or spa for the first 2 weeks post-operatively.

Should you develop a fever, discharge from the wound, or the knee becomes hot to touch or your calf muscle becomes swollen and painful then please call my office immediately on 03 9885.7773.

Communication

If you are having any problems or if you are concerned at all, please contact my office immediately on phone 9885.7773.

Remember, if your pain increases, check for signs of infection (redness, fever, etc.), decrease your activities, remember to use RICE (Rest, Ice, Compression and Elevation) in conjunction with your pain medication as prescribed. If the pain persists, or if there are signs of infection, call my office immediately on phone 9885.7773.

