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## Discharge Instructions: Total Knee Arthroplasty

### Wound Care:

- Remove your Mepilex knee dressing in 7 days.
- Leave skin glue under dressing in place until it falls off in the shower in 2-3 weeks.
- You may shower 2 days after your surgery. Allow water to run over your dressing and pat dry.
- A small amount of drainage visible on the dressing is common and expected after knee surgery. If drainage persists or increases more than 5 days, call Dr. Stapletons' office at (304) 647-5114.
- Some swelling and bruising of the hip, knee and leg can occur after surgery, this is normal.
- Do not scrub or pick at your dressing or incisions.
- Do not apply any lotions, ointments, or creams to your incisions unless directed to do so by Dr. Stapleton.
- Do not submerge incisions underwater (bath, swimming pool, etc.) until fully healed (typically 4 weeks).
- There are no sutures to remove, they are beneath your skin and will dissolve over time.

### Activity/ Precautions:

- Weightbearing and range of motion as tolerated.
- It is important to keep you knee as straight as possible, avoid placing anything under your knee. Goals should be full extension and 90 degrees for flexion by 2-3 weeks post-operative.
- You will start out patient physical therapy within 1 week after surgery. You will have to call and schedule this at a facility of your choosing.
- Please see exercises and activities packet online at [www.stapletonortho.com](http://www.stapletonortho.com)

### Diet:

- Begin with clear liquids and light food (jello, toast, etc.)
- Progress to your normal diet if you are not nauseated.



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## **Pain / Medications**

- It is easier to maintain pain control if you stay ahead of the pain. It is difficult to catch up with your pain if it gets too severe.
- Expect to have pain following surgery. Pain level of 4-5/10 is our goal. The pain medications prescribed by Dr. Stapleton should provide relief, but often does not take all the pain away. The first few days after surgery are often the most painful. Your pain will improve with time.
- Please use narcotic medications (Tramadol/Oxycodone) sparingly and slowly try to decrease the amount and frequency over the next two weeks.
- Do not make important decisions or sign any legal documents while on narcotic pain medication.
- **Constipation** is common after surgery due to pain medication and lack of activity. Consider taking a stool softener such as Miralax or Colace as needed.

## **Continue all medications you were taking before surgery in addition to the medications Dr. Stapleton prescribed below.**

### ***Narcotic Pain Medication***

- You have been prescribed a narcotic pain medication.
  - I **Tramadol 50mg by mouth every 4-6 hours as needed for pain.**
  - I **Oxycodone 5mg by mouth every 6-8 hours as needed for pain.**

### ***Non-narcotic Pain Medication***

- In addition to your narcotic medication, you should also take:
  - I Tylenol 1,000 mg every 6 hours. Do not exceed 4,000mg of Tylenol per day.
  - I Ibuprofen 600 mg every 8 hours for additional pain control.
    - Take this medication with food to help avoid stomach upset.

### ***Blood Thinner***

- You have been prescribed a medication to help prevent blood clots in your legs after surgery (medication indicated below). **It is very important for you to take this medication as directed.**
  - I Aspirin 81mg (Enteric Coated) - Take one pill by mouth two times per day for 30 days.
  - I Lovenox 30mg – subcutaneous injection every 12 hours for 30 days.

## DR. ERIK STAPLETON

FELLOWSHIP TRAINED ORTHOPEDIC SURGEON  
Sports Medicine Specialist



<https://www.stapletonortho.com/>



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### Cryotherapy / Ice:

- Use ice packs regularly for 2 weeks after surgery to help with pain and swelling.
- Apply ice for 20 minutes every 2-4 hours while awake.
- Ice or cold pack should never be applied directly on the skin as this may cause frostbite. A cloth or towel should always be used between the skin and ice pack to protect the skin.
- You may consider purchasing a commercially available ice and compression device available online (e.g., amazon.com). Some options include a NICE Machine, Game Ready machine, or Cryocuff. These devices are not always covered by insurance; please contact your insurance company for cost details. If desired, Dr. Stapleton can write you a prescription for these devices.

### Activity:

- Weightbearing and range of motion as tolerated.
- It is important to keep you knee as straight as possible, avoid placing anything under your knee. Goals should be full extension and 90 degrees for flexion by 2-3 weeks post-operative.
- Take frequent short walks to help promote blood flow in your legs and minimize the risk of blood clots.
- **Do not drive while on narcotic pain medication.**
- Do not drive until cleared by Dr. Stapleton which is generally within the first month after surgery.

### Physical Therapy:

- Formal physical therapy will be ordered by Dr. Stapleton after your surgery. You will be provided with a prescription for therapy to start within 1 week after your surgery. Please schedule this before your operation. In some cases if you are discharged to rehab you will start therapy there and then continue outpatient.
  - Start exercises immediately after surgery as seen in the accompanying packet online.

**For Additional Questions and Information Please see TKA FAQ packet online at [www.stapletonortho.com](http://www.stapletonortho.com)**



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### Return to Work or School:

- You may return to work or school as soon as you are comfortable and able to walk safely in your sling. This typically occurs 1-2 weeks after surgery. Return to work/school clearance notes can be obtained from Dr. Stapletons' office if needed.
- Do not drive a car or operate heavy machinery while on narcotics.

### Follow-up Appointments:

- Your first post-operative appointment will be in approximately 10-14 days.
- If you do not have an appointment scheduled, please call Dr. Stapletons' office at (304) 647-5114.
- Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Please keep and attend all appointments and call Dr. Stapleton if you have concerns or problems.

### When to call for help:

**Call 911** anytime you think you may need emergency care. For example, call if:

You pass out (lose consciousness).

You have severe trouble breathing.

You have sudden chest pain and shortness of breath.

### Call the office at (304) 647-5114 if you have:

Severe pain that does not improve with pain medication.

Calf or lower leg pain and swelling.

Fever over 101°F for more than one day.

Incision keeps bleeding 3 days after your surgery.

Signs of infection, such as redness around incision or pus draining from your incision.

**If you have questions or concerns during normal business hours, please call the office at (304) 647-5114.**

**After hours please call the answering service at (304) 433-8788**