

Guide to Knee Surgery

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Prior to Surgery:

- 1) Review the “North Oaks Surgery Patient Handbook” which includes important general information about your surgery and our surgery locations and their contact information.
 - a. It can be found online at http://www.northoaks.org/documents/NorthOaks-SurgicalServices-PatientHandbook-final_web.pdf
 - b. We can also get you a copy if you are unable to access online.

- 2) Please try to notify our office of any illness one week prior to your scheduled surgery date (e.g. skin abrasions, rashes, insect bites, pimples around the operative site, upper respiratory or urinary tract infections).

- 3) Please leave valuables (jewelry, contact lenses etc.) at home.

- 4) If you have significant medical problems, please contact your internist or medical doctor for documentation or “clearance” prior to surgery. The need for this clearance will typically be discussed during your evaluation with us. Please make sure that we have received this documentation prior to surgery.

- 5) If you have any disability forms or leave papers, please give these to our office for completion. Do not bring them the day of surgery.

- 6) Eating or drinking after midnight before your surgery, failure to arrive at your scheduled time, or certain medical problems may cause your surgery to be cancelled. This is for your safety.

7) Bring / wear loose fitting clothing to allow room for the postoperative dressings, slings, or braces that may be used after surgery.

8) It may be helpful to arrange additional help if you have to go up stairs to get home such as an apartment.

Surgery Locations:



Our Inpatient Surgical Units are located in the Tower of North Oaks Medical Center.

- Surgical Intensive Care Unit is on the 2nd Floor
- General Surgery Unit is on the 3rd Floor
- Orthopaedic/Neurosurgery Unit is on the 5th Floor

North Oaks Inpatient Surgery Units

Located within North Oaks Medical Center
15790 Paul Vega, MD, Dr.
Hammond, LA
(985) 230-6086



Our Same Day Surgery area is located on the second floor of North Oaks Medical Center.

North Oaks Same Day Surgery Unit

Located within North Oaks Medical Center
15790 Paul Vega, MD, Dr.
Hammond, LA
(985) 230-2100



North Oaks Surgery Center is located on Veterans Boulevard across from North Oaks Medical Center, less than one mile from the hospital.

North Oaks Surgery Center

42144 Veterans Blvd.
Hammond, LA
(985) 230-7333

After Surgery:

- 1) You will be given a prescription for pain medication before your discharge. You may also be given a prescription for nausea medication. Please let us know if you are particularly prone to nausea after surgery or with pain medicine so we can anticipate this for your comfort.
- 2) You will be given an appointment to see Dr. Witty in the office between 3 and 14 days after surgery. This will depend on the type of surgery. Typically, this will be made for you at the time of your discharge from the hospital or surgery center.
- 3) Physical Therapy:
 - a. Depending on your particular surgery, you may need to arrange your first physical therapy appointment prior to your surgery date. We can help you pick a physical therapist. This will be discussed with you.

Crutches or other assistive devices:

- 1) Please review the following resource regarding the appropriate use of crutches and walking aids. This document is also available to download from our website.
- 2) Our therapist can also assist you

<http://orthoinfo.aaos.org/topic.cfm?topic=a00181>

Recovery at Home:

- 1) If you are discharged the day of surgery, the first meal at home should be clear liquids. Slowly increase to other easily tolerated meals (ex. rice cakes, soup) to prevent any nausea. Taking your pain medication with some food may help.

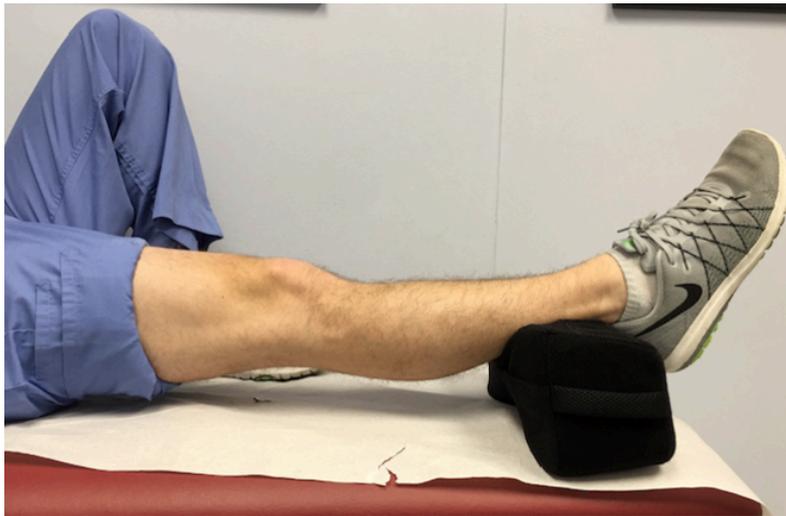
- 2) If you have received a nerve block, it will often begin to wear off later in the evening. Take the pain medication right when you begin to feel any pain. (See Nerve Block section below)

- 3) Apply an ice pack as much as possible after surgery. Apply an ice pack for 30 minutes on the knee followed by 30 minutes off the knee and repeat as needed. It is common to use the ice packs for the first few months after surgery when the knee gets sore, especially after therapy. Ice therapy has been shown to be as effective as narcotic pain medication so it is an important addition to the post-operative regimen.

- 4) Specific exercises may or may not be started right after surgery. You will be instructed about any exercises that need to be started. This will depend on the nature of your surgery and what needed to be performed. If exercises will be started, they will be discussed with you prior to discharge.

NOTE: Dr. Witty's website provides videos regarding exercises under the tab "Patient Info and Education >> Postoperative information and Instructions"

- 5) Try to get up and move around as much as possible keeping in mind any weight bearing restrictions that may be in place. Please see “Weight bearing” section below.
- 6) Prop your leg up by placing a bump of pillows or similar underneath the calf, ankle, or foot area. This will help gravity pull your knee straight. This can be done in or out of the brace. (See below)



- 7) If you begin to have painful swelling, redness, temperature greater than 100.4, or drainage from your incision, call Dr.Witty’s office immediately at:
Day phone: (985) 230 – 2663
After hours number: (985) 345 - 2700

Nerve Block:

- 1) The anesthesia team may have placed a nerve block prior to surgery
- 2) A nerve block is a procedure where numbing medication is injected around the nerves that travel to your knee.

- 3) It should provide 8 – 12 hours of relief. During that time, the knee may feel numb and you may even be unable to move the extremity.
- 4) Start taking your pain medication immediately when you start to feel any pain even if it is minimal.
- 5) Monitor your skin closely and place a towel between the skin and any ice pack to avoid frost bite. This is important when the block is working because you will not be able to feel anything.

Brace:

- 1) After knee surgery you may or may not be placed into a special brace. It will be either a knee immobilizer or a hinged knee brace. The hinged knee brace has special settings that will allow either no motion, some motion, or full motion of the knee depending on the surgery.

Example of post-operative hinged brace with surgical dressings.



- 2) Keep the knee brace on at night, unless specifically instructed beforehand.

3) It is important to achieve full knee extension (knee straight) as soon as possible after surgery. Place a bump of sheets, towels, pillow, or something similar under the ankle / calf area to facilitate this. Putting these under the knee will cause the knee to flex and put the knee at risk for a contracture to develop which will make postoperative therapy more difficult.

4) TO USE HINGED BRACE:

NOTE: Go to

<http://www.djoglobal.com/products/donjoy/x-act-rom-knee> to see a complete video of the details of the ROM brace. If this is not your brace, keep in mind that most braces have similar components that do the same thing. See general instructions below and our website for video.

- a. Make sure the side supporting bars are directly along the mid-thigh and leg area. The brace should extend from just above mid thigh to just above the ankle. See image below.



- b. The sidebars are also adjustable to position the brace on the leg as described above. Press the buttons in to allow the straps to adjust along the sidebar.



- c. The Velcro straps on the brace are removable to allow tightening. You may need to re-tighten the brace during the day to keep it snug.



- i. Avoid the dials slipping toward the front of the knee.



- d. Make sure the gears on the dials along the inside and outside of the brace line up with the knee at about the level of the kneecap. The knee should move smoothly in the brace.



- e. Depending on your surgery, you may have your brace “LOCKED” so that it will not allow any motion, or “UNLOCKED” for motion. Note the closed lock on the dial of the brace. You will be instructed on when to start to open the brace for more motion.



- f. You will click the switch to unlock when you have been cleared to start knee motion.



Weightbearing:

- 1) Depending on your surgery you may or may not be able to put weight on your extremity. This will be discussed before your surgery and you will receive specific instructions prior to your discharge from the hospital or surgery center.

Wound Care:

- 1) Typically your dressing will consist of a brown “ACE” elastic type of wrap from your foot/ankle to your thigh. You may also have a white compression type dressings instead (see image below). Underneath this will be white padding and gauze. There may be yellow colored strips underneath the gauze and padding. In other cases, there may be small white tape-like strips (“steri-strips). The steri-strips will begin to peel off on their own. There will be some swelling after surgery and bruising is common.

Post-operative dressings.



Iodoform (yellow gauze) on left. "Steri - strips" on right image.



Examples of compression (TED hose) with 4x4 gauze post-operative dressings:



Examples of compression (TED hose) with adhesive post-operative dressings:



- 2) After two days you may change the dressing using 4x4 inch gauze and ACE wrap (4 or 6 inch). Change the dressing two days after surgery unless you have been instructed otherwise. You may also use absorbent adhesive dressings that seal around all four sides of the bandage (see image above). Change this once a day until the incisions are dry (no spots of blood or oozing on the dressing). Once the incisions are completely dry for a 24hr period, you may shower. See section below.

- 3) We recommend to continue to use the ACE wrap without the gauze (once incisions are dry) to help reduce/prevent swelling of the leg. You may also use a compression type

stocking instead (see image above). Please call if any questions.

Shower / Bathing:

- 1) You may start taking a shower once your incisions are completely dry for a 24 hour period. Do not submerge the knee in water until cleared by doctor.
- 2) Keep in mind that your leg will not be as strong as it was before surgery and could easily give out on you. Please take needed precautions when showering to prevent any falls. This may include the use of a shower chair or other type of equipment. If you would like us to order this for you, please let us know.

Ice:

- 1) Ice (cryotherapy) can be applied to the knee immediately after surgery to help with postoperative pain and swelling. Some studies show that ice treatment is as beneficial as pain medication. Commercial cooler type devices attached to a cuff that wraps around the knee are helpful, but icing can be performed using standard ice packs.
- 2) If the ice machine or pack causes some condensation, place a small hand towel (or similar) to the knee and then place the pack/device on top. You may undo the straps while keeping the knee straight to do this. This will help prevent the dressing from getting wet from condensation. It will also help from the skin becoming too cold or burning.

- 3) Apply the pack for 30 minutes on the knee and 30 minutes off the knee. Continue that cycle as much as possible to help with pain, inflammation, and swelling. It is common to use the ice packs for the first few months after surgery when the knee gets sore, especially after therapy. There is no limitation to how often you can use the ice machine or pack as long as you are comfortable.
- 4) In some cases a special device that applies compression and cold therapy may be utilized to facilitate recovery. Many patients like the way the device helps their extremity. This will be discussed with you before surgery if necessary.

When to Call:

- 1) Please call our office during business hours if you think you will need a pain medication refill. If you are having trouble, we would like to know. Also, on call doctors can **NOT** call in pain medication over the phone. Keep in mind office hours are 8:00am to 5:00pm Monday – Thursday. Friday office hours are 8:00am to 12:00. Call earlier in the day so a prescription can be arranged for you before office close.
- 2) If you begin to have painful swelling, redness, temperature greater than 100.4, or drainage from your incision, call Dr. Witty's office immediately.
- 3) For any concerns regarding your surgery.