

# Patellar Fracture, Patellar Tendon or Quadriceps Tendon Repair

Updated March 2019

## **CRUTCHES AND WEIGHT BEARING:**

- Crutches should be used at all times for the first two weeks
- After 2 weeks, you may wean off your crutches and only use them for balance and comfort
- You are allowed to be full weight-bearing immediately after surgery, as long as you are wearing your brace.

## **BRACING:**

- Wear your hinged knee brace locked in full extension at ALL times during the first 6 weeks, except while showering
- Your surgeon will discuss the range of motion you are allowed at your 2-week post op follow up visit
- You will wear your knee brace for 8-12 weeks

## **WOUND CARE:**

### **Bandages:**

- If you find the dressing is too tight, unwrap the tensor bandage and rewrap it looser.
- On post-op day 5 you can remove your dressing. Leave white strips in place, if you have them.

### **Shower:**

- You may shower at post-op day 5 once your bandages are off. Do not cover incision.
- Keep out of direct spray of the water and pat dry.
- Keep white strips on your incision. They may fall off in the shower.
- **NO soaking in bathtub/hot tub or pool for first 2-3 weeks until all scabs gone from incision.**

## **SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF INFECTION:**

- Excessive or worsening pain, increased redness around the incision sites, drainage from incisions that looks like pus and/or is foul smelling, if fever runs above 38.5°C.
- If any of the above symptoms occur call Healthlink at 8-1-1 or go to the emergency department right away.

## **CONTROL OF PAIN AND SWELLING:**

### **Pain Medication:**

- For the first few days take your pain medication and anti-inflammatories regularly as instructed, then wean as tolerated. Avoid taking pain medications on empty stomach, as it can make you nauseous.

### **Cold Therapy:**

- If you have a cold therapy machine, use it as much as possible.
- If you don't have a cold therapy machine, you can remove outer bandage to ice for 20-30 minutes, at least four times for several days. You may use it more frequently as needed. It will help in reducing pain. Avoid placing ice directly on bare skin to prevent frostbite and give a break of 30 minutes in between sessions.

### **Elevation:**

- Keep leg elevated **above the level of your heart** as often as possible with a pillow under your calf, NOT under the knee.

#### **PREVENTING BLOOD CLOTS**

- Make sure you get up and walk around as much as possible; mobilizing prevents clots.
- Take the blood thinner your surgeon prescribed.

#### **Signs and Symptoms of Blood Clots:**

- Severe and worsening pain and swelling in the calf muscle.
- Chest pain and/or shortness of breath.
- If any of above symptoms occur call Health Link at 8-1-1 or go to emergency department right away.
- **Blood clots, if left untreated, have the potential to become LIFE THREATENING.**

#### **DRIVING:**

- If surgery on RIGHT KNEE you are restricted from driving for 8 weeks post-surgery
- If surgery on LEFT KNEE you are restricted from driving for 2 weeks post-surgery (if you are driving an automatic transmission)
- You may return to driving a vehicle (non-commercial) when you are no longer affected by pain, are not under the influence of pain medications, can have knee flexion past 90 degrees, and are able to **fully weight bear on right leg for automatic transmission and both right and left legs for standard transmission**. You must also be confident you can react appropriately in an emergency.

#### **FLYING:**

- You are advised to avoid flying within 4 weeks of your operation. Flying within 4 weeks of surgery increases your risk of developing a blood clot following surgery.

**Due to the anesthetic, for the next 24 hours, do NOT drive, sign legal documents, provide child care on your own or consume alcohol.**

#### **EXPECTED RECOVERY:**

- Back to sedentary duties by 2-6 weeks post-op
- Back to medium or modified duties by 3-6 months post-op
- Back to heavy labour or sports by 6-9 months post-op

#### **POST OPERATIVE KNEE EXERCISES (MAY START 1<sup>ST</sup> DAY AFTER SURGERY):**

- Straight leg raises: while wearing brace locked straight, foot straight and turned out, lift leg up off bed/floor. Goal is 50-100 reps three times per day.
- Isometric quadriceps contractions: (letting the leg rest straight) squeeze the quad muscles without lifting the leg off the bed/floor.