
High Tibial Osteotomy / Distal Femoral Varus Osteotomy

Updated March 2020

CRUTCHES AND WEIGHT-BEARING:

- Use crutches to assist with ambulation. Non weight bearing for first 6 weeks.

BRACE:

- Wear brace locked in extension for first 2 weeks. Progressive range of motion will be started at first postoperative visit.
- Your brace will be worn for 6 weeks.

WOUND CARE:

Bandages:

- If you find that your dressing is too tight, you may 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.
- Reapply tensor bandage or compression sock to involved knee, from ankle to above the knee.

Shower:

- You may shower at post-op day 5 once your bandages are off without covering incision sites, keep out of direct water spray and pat dry.
- Keep white strips on, they may fall off in the shower.
- **NO soaking in bathtub/hot tub or pool for first 2-3 weeks and all scabs are 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 Central Alberta Orthopedics at 403-309-2001 or go to the emergency department right away.

CONTROL OF PAIN AND SWELLING:

Pain Medication:

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

Cold Therapy:

- If you have a cold therapy machine, use it as much as possible. You may wear the cold therapy machine under your brace. If you don't have 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 (knee) 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 calf muscle.
- Chest pain and/or shortness of breath.
- If any of the above symptoms occur call Health Link at 8-1-1 or go to the emergency department right away.
- **Blood clots, if left untreated, have the potential to be LIFE THREATENING.**

EXPECTED TOTAL RECOVERY:

- Walking without crutches approximately 8 weeks after surgery.
- Back to work within 3-6 months following surgery if laborer, sedentary or desk type work you may return to 2-6 weeks following surgery.
- Progress back to sports after 6 months.

DRIVING:

- Right: You may drive when you are allowed to fully weight bear out of your brace.
- Left: You may drive when you are allowed to be out of your brace.
- You may return to driving a vehicle (non-commercial) when you are no longer affected by pain, under the influence of pain medications and are confident that 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.

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