



Royal Berkshire
NHS Foundation Trust

Advice following knee arthroscopy

Adult Day Surgery Unit

What is an arthroscopy?

An arthroscopy allows a surgeon to diagnose and treat joint disorders by providing a clear view inside the knee. It is performed under either a general anaesthetic (you are asleep) or spinal anaesthetic (you are awake but will be numb from the waist down) and the surgeon will make small incisions (keyholes) and insert a telescope into the joint. Surgical instruments can also be inserted during the procedure to remove or repair damaged tissues.

If you have had a general anaesthetic

The anaesthetic drug remains in your body for up to 24 hours after your operation and over this period you may feel tired and drowsy. It is essential that you heed the following advice:

- Do not drive a car, or any other vehicles, including bicycles.
- Do not operate machinery or appliances such as cookers/kettles.
- Go straight home and rest quietly for the remainder of the day.
- Have a responsible adult to look after you for at least 24 hours.
- Drink plenty of fluids and eat a light diet, avoiding alcohol.
- Do not lock the bathroom or toilet door. Do not make yourself inaccessible to the person looking after you.
- You may take painkillers such as Paracetamol or Codeine. If you require stronger tablets, these will be provided before leaving the Unit. (If you have had a spinal anaesthetic – make sure that you have pain relief ready when this wears off.)
- Do not sign important documents or make major decisions for 24 hours after the anaesthetic.

After your knee arthroscopy

Following your knee arthroscopy, with or without cartilage removal, it will take between three and eight weeks before your knee is back to normal. However, you will not need to be off work for this entire period. If you have a sedentary job you should be able to return to work within seven days. If your job is physical and involves climbing and squatting, you should stay off work for at least two weeks. Please ask your nurse for a medical certificate before you leave hospital if you need one for your employer.

- You will need to rest for the next two or three days. When sitting, keep your leg raised on a stool, to prevent swelling.
- It is important that you do not get your knee wet for 10 days after your operation.
- Remove your bandage the day after your operation, then apply a double layer of the tubigrip provided. This should be worn during the day only, for two weeks.
- Take painkillers as required following dosage instructions on the packet.
- Follow the exercises given to you by the physiotherapist or nurse. A reminder of these can be found in the leaflet 'Exercises following knee arthroscopy'.
- After 10 days, you may soak the dressings and paper stitches off in the bath.
- If your leg becomes swollen, you will need to raise it and rest. Apply an ice pack for 20 minutes. You can repeat this every hour for a few hours until the swelling is reduced. (A bag of frozen peas wrapped in a towel works very well.)
- You should not drive until you have a full pain-free range of movement in your leg. This is usually for three to five days following

your surgery. If you feel able to drive before this time, please seek advice from your GP and check with your motor insurance company.

If there is anything you do not understand or if you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to discuss them with your nurse.

During the first 24 hours following your discharge

If you have any further concerns about your surgery, please telephone the ADSU: 0118 322 7622. Fax: 0118 322 8214

Opening hours are 7.30am to 10.00pm Monday-Friday, 7.30am to 4.00pm Saturday. If you need help/advice outside these hours, please telephone the Royal Berkshire Hospital switchboard on 0118 322 5111 and ask for the on-call surgery doctor. Please note that this should be for emergencies only.

After 24 hours, please seek advice from your GP.

For further information about the Trust, visit our website
www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

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