

Leaving the hospital after total knee arthroplasty surgery with Prevena

How to take care of yourself when you get home



Pain, swelling and discomfort

- Keep your leg elevated when not using it to reduce swelling. You may lower your leg to move from one place to another, but this may cause your leg to throb and swelling to increase.
- For pain and swelling, apply ice for 20 minutes at a time. Take 20-minute breaks in-between.
- You can use heat after the swelling is completely gone.



Medication

- Start tapering pain medication as soon as possible after you leave the hospital to avoid health risks. Most patients are on pain medication for 1-2 weeks after surgery. If you need a medication refill please request it 2 days before you need it.
- Take over the counter or prescribed laxatives while using opioid medication. Tell your doctor if you have any medication allergies.
- If you are taking high doses of opioids you will be prescribed Narcan to use in case of an overdose. Keep it with you at all times.
- You will take blood thinners for up to 6 weeks after surgery.
- Please check with your doctor's office before taking over the counter pain medication because some medications may interfere with your prescribed blood thinners.




Wound and dressing care

- It is OK to shower right after your surgery, but keep your dressing clean and dry and do not get the battery pack wet.


OHSU Total Joint Orthopedic Clinic

Weekdays, 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

 503-418-8889

www.ohsu.edu/ortho

For urgent needs after hours, weekends and holidays:

 503-494-8311

Ask for the orthopaedic resident on-call

Tip: MyChart messages

If you have a question that can wait 2 weekdays for a response, try sending a MyChart message to your doctor. You can even attach a photo to the message.

- After 7 days, you may remove your dressing if your incision is no longer draining. If it's draining, cover it with clean, dry gauze.
- No soaking or swimming in pool, hot tub or bath until at least 6 weeks after surgery and getting OK from surgeon.
- Avoid creams or ointments on your incision until your doctor says it's OK.
- Expect bruising and swelling in the knee and down to the foot. Swelling can take months to go away. For questions about swelling or bruising call us at 503-418-8889 or update us on MyChart.
- Pain Pump/Nerve Block: You likely received a regional anesthesia (also called a nerve block or home pump). It causes the operative leg to be numb for 1-4 days to reduce your discomfort. However, as the anesthetic begins to wear off, you are encouraged to take your pain medication as prescribed. If you believe that your pain pump is not working correctly call 503-494-8311 and ask for the Home Pump Physician On-Call.

Wound Prevena/PICO – Single Use Negative Pressure Therapy System

- This is a single use system that is applied directly to the incision site to prevent wound breakdown.
- You may shower, but you must cover this dressing and unit while showering. Keep the battery pack dry.
- The therapy unit will automatically time out at approximately 7-10 days of cumulative running. You will be alerted with a 'beep' to notify you it is time to remove the dressing. Once the device shuts itself off, you will be able to remove your dressing as follows:
 - Starting at the top of the dressing, gently stretch the dressing border to release the adhesive and remove the dressing following the directional line of the incision.
 - Once removed, you may discard the entire dressing including the cartridge and battery pack.
- If your therapy unit stops before the end of 7-10 days:
 - If you have an ace wrap over the dressing, remove wrap and continue with the dressing removal as stated above.
 - If you have a splint/cast over the dressing, remove the therapy unit, cut the tubing at the level of splint/cast, and cover the end of the tubing with tape.



When to call the doctor

Call our office or the on-call doctor right away if you have any of these:

- Fever greater than 100.4°F
- Chills
- Shortness of breath
- Extreme redness or swelling of surgical cuts (incisions)
- Yellow or white pus-like fluid draining from your surgical cuts
- Bleeding that soaks through your dressings and that you cannot control by applying firm pressure

- Pain in the back of your calf or swelling in your leg that does not go away with elevation
- Pain that does not get better with your prescribed medications



Activity

- Your weight-bearing and range of motion status will be given to you at the hospital. It is OK to gradually increase daily activity.
- It is best to walk several times every day but plan to rest between each walk.
- When you can return to work depends on the type of work you do. Ask your surgeon if you have any work restrictions.
- You can drive once you are fully weight-bearing, no longer immobilized, no longer taking opioids, and can stop the car in an emergency without feeling pain.
- If you are homebound after your surgery you may receive physical therapy in your home. The purpose of this therapy is to work on gait and balance. Physical therapy usually starts about 4 days after your surgery.
- You will have your first appointment with our office 2-3 weeks after your surgery. If you have non-absorbable sutures they will be removed then.