

**Patient
Information**

Knee arthroscopy

Introduction

This leaflet provides information about your arthroscopic knee surgery.

What is an arthroscopy?

An arthroscopy is an operation that enables an orthopaedic surgeon to examine the inside of a joint. This allows a diagnosis to be made and also any treatment to be carried out. This is done by making very small incisions around the knee area and inserting a narrow telescope.

Prior to your operation

It is important that you follow the instructions below.

- Do not eat anything, including sweets or chewing gum, for 6 hours before your appointment
- You can drink clear fluids up to 2 hours before your appointment.

On arrival

When you arrive at the hospital you must report to the location stated in your admissions letter. You will be visited by a member of your consultant's team, an anaesthetist (who will give you anaesthetic) and the nurse who will be looking after you during your stay.

You will be asked to change into a hospital gown and to remove any dentures. We advise patients not to wear any jewellery other than a wedding band which will be covered with tape before going to theatre.

Your personal items will be left on the ward/day unit during the operation.

You will be taken to the operating theatre on a bed, trolley or chair by a ward nurse and a theatre porter.

Reference No.

GHPI0558_03_16

Department

Physiotherapy

Review due

March 2019

**Patient
Information**

After the operation

Recovery

After the surgery you will be taken to the recovery area where a nurse will monitor your progress. When the recovery nurse is happy with your condition you will be able to return to the ward/day unit. You will be given pain relief to make you more comfortable.

Discharge information

Dressings

After the operation you will find a large bandage around your knee. This will become loose over the following 48 to 72 hours. Remove the bandage but leave the steri-strips or plasters in place. If there is blue gauze over the wound, replace it with a plaster. Always wash your hands before and after checking your wounds.

Washing

When washing and bathing take care to keep the incision wounds clean and dry until healed. This will take about 7 to 10 days.

Pain relief

You may have some discomfort for several weeks after the surgery but taking regular pain relief for the first few days will make you feel more comfortable.

Going home

For 48 hours after the operation:

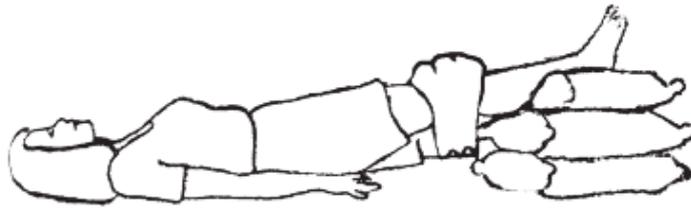
- Do not drive a car, ride a bicycle or operate machinery
- Do not drink alcohol
- Do not sign any legally binding documents
- Do not take sleeping tablets.

Swelling

It is important to reduce the swelling as much as possible although you can expect some swelling to last for several weeks after the surgery. Using ice as described below and sitting with your leg raised will help reduce the swelling.

Patient Information

1. Use either a bag of frozen vegetables or a polythene bag containing ice which is tightly sealed and all the air expelled. Ensure that your wound and dressings remain dry.
2. Cover your knee with a damp tea towel or cloth. It is important that ice does not come into direct contact with the skin as it can lead to an ice burn.
3. Place the ice pack over your knee. Hold in place with a towel or bandage.
4. Leave in place for 20 minutes.



The skin will become red and cold. Make sure that you check the skin every 5 minutes and note the following advice.

- If the skin becomes white, blue or blotchy remove the ice pack **immediately**
- If the area becomes more painful **remove** the ice pack.

Daily function

- Try to walk as normally as possible
- Try to walk up the stairs. If this is too painful in the early days, do one step at the time. When going upstairs, step up with your good leg first and when going downstairs step down with the operated leg first.

Physiotherapy

The success of your operation will often depend on the amount of effort you are prepared to put into your rehabilitation. The exercises might seem hard at first and a little sore. If you feel that the exercises are making your knee more painful or increasing any swelling, cut down on the number that you are doing for a few days.

**Patient
Information**

If you have any concerns over the level of pain you have, please contact your local physiotherapy department. Please complete the exercises regularly throughout the day. If you fit them into your daily routine you are more likely to do them.

Exercises

The following exercises can be done from day 1 after the operation.

1. Straighten your knee by tightening the muscles at the front of your thigh. Hold for 5 seconds and release. Repeat this regularly.



2. In sitting, bend your knee as far as is comfortable as shown in the picture. Do not force it. If you have had your meniscus repaired do not bend your knee past a right angle. You will be advised if you have had this procedure.



3. Sit with your leg straight. Push your kneecap quite firmly in all directions. If you have had a lateral release operation, pay extra attention to pushing the kneecap towards the inside of your knee. Repeat this 10 times and perform regularly throughout the day.



**Patient
Information**

4. When comfortable, practice standing on your operated leg. If you feel safe doing this then you can practice not holding on to anything. If you find this is easy, try and do it with your eyes closed.



5. The following exercises are to restore strength and control to the muscles around your knee. You may begin them as soon as you feel able to. Standing with your feet shoulder width apart, slowly squat keeping your heels on the floor.



6. Try and sit down slowly on a chair. This can be made more difficult by changing the height of the chair or moving your operated leg closer to the chair.



7. Stand with your affected leg on a step. Slowly lower yourself down until your other foot brushes the floor. Straighten your knee but do not let it fully lock. This is quite a hard exercise and you may not be able to do it for a couple of weeks after the operation.



**Patient
Information**

Sport

You should be able to return to sport when you feel able to do so. It may take longer to return to sports that involve twisting and turning. If you have any questions please discuss this with your doctor when you are seen in clinic or contact the ward physiotherapist.

Risks

An arthroscopy is a very safe operation with very few risks. Your knee may be sore and swollen for a few weeks but this is short term. There is a very small risk of developing a blood clot and a small percentage of patients will get an infection.

Contact information

If after leaving hospital, you have any concerns please contact the ward or unit where you had your surgery. If you feel your concerns requires more urgent attention please contact your GP or NHS 111.

NHS 111

Tel: 111

Alternatively, you can contact your nearest Physiotherapy Department.

Physiotherapy Department

Cheltenham General Hospital
Tel: 0300 422 3040

Gloucestershire Royal Hospital
Tel: 0300 422 8527

Cirencester Hospital
Tel: 01285 655711

Dilke Memorial Hospital
Tel: 0300 421 8640

Lydney Hospital
Tel: 0300 421 8722

North Cotswolds Hospital
Tel: 0300 421 8770

The Vale (Dursley)
Tel: 0300 421 8494

**Patient
Information**

Stroud Hospital
Tel: 0300 421 8080

Tewkesbury Hospital
Tel: 0300 421 6100

The Physiotherapy Departments are open Monday to Friday,
8:30am to 4:30pm.

Further information

The Centre for Orthopaedics & Sport Medicine

Website: www.arthroscopy.com

American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS)

Website: www.aaos.org

Content reviewed: March 2016