

## Physiotherapy Department Patient Information Leaflet Routine Total Knee Replacement (TKR)

### Post-Operative Recovery

**Phase 1** - After the operation and as soon as you are awake and able to, begin to move your feet and legs within comfort in the bed. It is very important you maintain good circulation to reduce the risk of developing a Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT). Pumping your feet backwards and forwards, as often as you can and drinking lots of water, as well as moving around regularly when you are able to, all help to lower the risk. You may experience swelling and heat around the knee as part of the healing process. Using a cold pack several times a day is very beneficial to help alleviate these symptoms as well as elevating the leg for periods of time during the day.

You will be seen by a physiotherapist when you are medically stable and the effects of your anaesthetic have worn off, this may be in the afternoon after the procedure or the following morning.

Initially, we will teach you bed exercises, help you out of bed into standing using a walking frame and take a few steps to sit in a chair.

It is important that you let the physio know if at any time you are feeling light headed, nauseous or your pain is not under control. The majority of patients are allowed to take as much weight on the operated leg as they can tolerate; the new knee is strong enough to take this and weight bearing actually encourages healing of the tissues and strengthening of the muscle around the new knee.

**Phase 2** - A physio will advise when you are safe to get yourself in and out of bed and walk around your room on your own. At first you will be aided by a frame, but you will progress onto crutches or walking sticks as soon as your physiotherapist feels you are able to.

In addition to the walks with your physiotherapist, you will be encouraged to practice walking up and down the ward corridor on your own using your walking aids.

You will also be taught the technique for getting up and down the stairs, and this will be practiced until you feel confident. This can be anything from 2 days after the surgery onwards.

### Exercises

- Your physiotherapist will teach you exercises after your surgery, these will be detailed on a printed sheet to help you remember them.
- It is **your** responsibility to do these exercises; they are the key to making a success of your procedure and will aid a faster recovery.
- It is normal to feel some pulling, stretching or discomfort, but we do not expect you to force the knee through pain.
- Your consultant would like you to be able to bend your operated knee to a 90° angle and lift your leg straight up off the bed without assistance before you are discharged home - your efforts with the exercises will make this happen.
- Try to do at least ten of each; morning, afternoon and night.

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## Mobility - Crutches/stick technique

Walking aid → Operated leg → Non-operated leg

**Stairs: Remember saying: “Good leg to heaven, bad leg to hell.”**

Going up:

1. Non-operated leg (good leg)
2. Operated leg (bad leg)
3. Walking aid

Going down:

1. Walking aid
2. Operated leg (bad leg)
3. Non-operated leg (good leg)

## Discharge Information

Your stay in hospital will be approximately 2-4 days (day 1 being the day after surgery). By the time you are discharged home you will be safe, independent and functional on the ward.

- *Getting in and out of the car* - Stand with your back facing the car seat and place walking aid to one side. Hold onto the doorframe and gently lower yourself into the passenger seat so that both legs are out of the car. Then ease each leg in one at a time, helping with your hands. Gently manoeuvre your bottom around as you do this so you are fully in and facing forward. It is helpful to have the car seat as far back as possible.
- *Exercises* - Continue with the exercise regime as shown by your physiotherapist.
- *Swelling* - Regularly use an ice pack and elevate the leg to help with swelling.
- *Mobility* - Gradually increase the distance you walk as you feel comfortable.
- *Getting in and out of bed* - There are no restrictions, but you may find it easier getting into bed with the non-operated leg first and out of bed with the operated leg first
- *Sleeping position* - You may sleep in any position you find comfortable and may find a pillow between your legs is more comfortable when sleeping on your side.
- *When sitting down or standing up* - Always have your arms out of the crutches when sitting down or standing up, otherwise your arms may get caught up in the crutches. Feel the chair/bed/toilet with the back of your legs before sitting down.
- *Outpatient Physiotherapy* - Your physiotherapist will discuss this with you.

## The Physiotherapy Service

The Nuffield Health Brentwood Hospital Physiotherapy Department offers a 7 day in-patient service. You will normally be seen morning and afternoon on a weekday and once a day at weekends. As we work as a team and you will meet more than one physio during your stay.

**Don't forget the Physiotherapists are here to help you and will be pleased to answer any questions that you may have during your stay or after your discharge. If you have any queries, please call 01277 695615.**

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