

## POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS OSTEOCHONDRAL TRANSPLANT

### MEDICATION

- One of three pain medications, Norco (hydrocodone), Tramadol or Tylenol #3 will be prescribed to you. Take as instructed and as needed.
  - Pain medication may cause constipation. You may take an over the counter stool softener (Colace, Senekot, etc) to help prevent this problem.
  - You should take these medicines with food or they may nauseate you.
  - You may not drive or operate heavy equipment while on narcotics
  - Pain medication is refilled on an individual basis and only during office hours.
- If you have a nerve block, **DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE BLOCK COMPLETELY WEARS OFF.**
  - Most patients find it helpful to take two pills 8-10 hours after surgery and scheduling two pills every four to six hours the first night and morning after and then gradually wean off as tolerated.
- Try to avoid anti-inflammatories such as Ibuprofen or Naprosyn for at least **six weeks** after surgery as this may impair tissue healing.
- Take one regular aspirin (325 mg) once a day for 14 days beginning the day after surgery unless you are allergic, have been prescribed another blood thinner or have a history of stomach ulcers.
- If prescribed Lovenox or Xarelto for prevention of blood clots, begin the day AFTER surgery and finish all injections or pills.
- **Resume all home medications unless otherwise instructed.**
- Call the office (713-486-7550) if you are having an adverse reaction to the medicine.

### WOUND CARE

- Do not unwrap your dressings or remove your TED hose. This aids in swelling and helps in the prevention of blood clots and infection.
- Dressings will be changed on your first post-operative visit and a new dressing applied. If they get **EXCESSIVELY** wet prior to this, meaning “soaked through,” contact the office.
- Until your first post-op visit, wrap the leg, **WITH BRACE**, in a large plastic garbage bag with tape at both ends to shower or bathe.
  - Dr. Flores will instruct you when you may shower without the brace on.
- Continue to use the bag, plastic wrap or waterproof bandages to keep incisions dry for at least 2 weeks after surgery.
- NO submersion of wounds (bath, hot tub, pool) is recommended for a minimum of 3 weeks after surgery.

### EXERCISE

- **Physical Therapy is a key component of recovery and should start within 1-3 days after surgery.** This appointment should be made **before surgery** to ensure you begin therapy on time. If you have difficulty doing this, contact the office for assistance.
- Regaining full extension quickly is critical to your recovery. **DO NOT** keep pillows under your knee leaving your knee in a bent position.
- A handout of exercises will be provided immediately after surgery that you may begin as soon as you are comfortable.

### CRUTCHES

- Non-weight bearing is required for healing of the cartilage-bone transplant. It is of critical importance that you do not bear weight until instructed to do so.
- Crutches will be needed until physical therapy and Dr. Flores deem them unnecessary based on the time from surgery, the strength in the involved leg and when you can walk with a **normal gait**.

## **BRACE**

- The post-operative brace, locked in full extension, is to be worn at all times except for when you are in the motion (CPM) machine or doing your exercises, including sleep.
- The brace is necessary for even the simplest tasks such as going to the restroom to protect your knee while your muscles are weak.
- Dr. Flores will instruct you when to open the brace and discontinue the brace.

## **CPM**

- A motion machine may be available and prescribed depending on your insurance. Many patients find it assists in pain reduction and motion.
- Use without brace, 1-2 hours at a time, 2-3 times a day with a goal of 90 degrees.
- Start at 0-30 degrees and increase as tolerated up to 90 degrees unless instructed otherwise. Over aggressive use may result in an increase in pain and swelling.
- Do not sleep in machine or exceed 90 degrees of bending.

## **COLD THERAPY**

- Ice should be used to assist in pain and swelling. Do not apply directly to exposed skin. Elevate your leg and try to ice 20-30 minutes every 3-4 hours if possible.
- A simple bag of frozen peas may be used as an inexpensive ice pack. Buy several bags of peas, place in a gallon size zip-lock bag making them about an inch thick and removing as much air as possible. Return to freezer, lying flat when done.

## **BRUISING**

- The lower leg may become swollen and bruised, which is normal. This is from the fluid and blood moving down the leg and should resolve in 10-14 days.
- Elevate your leg above heart level to help assist in decreasing swelling.
- **If you experience severe calf pain or swelling, call the office immediately or go to the nearest emergency room.**

## **EMERGENCIES**

- If you have an emergency contact Dr. Flores's office at 713-486-7550.
  - Uncontrolled nausea or vomiting, reaction to medication, inability to urinate, fever greater than 101.5 (low grade fevers 1-2 days after surgery is normal), severe pain not relieved by pain medication, redness or continued drainage around incisions (a small amount is normal), calf pain or severe swelling.
- **If you are having chest pain or difficulty breathing, call 911 or go to the closest emergency room.**

## **DENTAL WORK**

- If you need dental work within six weeks after surgery, please contact the office for instructions.

## **FOLLOW UP APPOINTMENT**

- Please make your first post-op visit 5-7 after surgery if not done so already.
- **If you have any questions, please call the office at 713-486-7550.**