

Patient Information

KNEE ARTHROSCOPY

Preparing for surgery

Once you have decided to undergo surgery, it is important that you prepare yourself both mentally and physically for the procedure. The following information is intended to answer some common questions that may apply to all patients. Specific considerations for you as an individual may require different preparation or expectations – if you require further clarification please seek this from Dr Mandziak or his secretary before your operation.

Please also read my 'Considerations Before Surgery' information sheet.

When Should a Knee Arthroscopy be Considered?

Surgery is considered when a patient has symptoms related to knee joint disease, and simple non-operative measures are insufficient.

Common problems of the knee joint that may undergo arthroscopic surgery include:

- Meniscal cartilage injuries
- Articular cartilage (chondral) injuries
- Removal of loose bodies
- Diagnosis or tissue biopsies.

The aims and benefits of a knee arthroscopy are to:

1. Relieve pain
2. Relieve clicking or locking symptoms
3. Improve mobility and function.

Expectations of Surgery and Recovery Time

Patients are happiest after their surgery when they have clear understanding of their surgical recovery, and realistic expectations of their rehabilitation. Knee arthroscopy has excellent outcomes when used for appropriate conditions.

Patients are generally advised to avoid any strenuous activities for the first 2 weeks. Patients often report some swelling and minor discomfort for 4-6 weeks, though swelling may persist to some degree for months.

Every patient is different and it is quite common for two patients with exactly the same treatment to experience a very different recovery.

How is Knee Arthroscopy Performed?

Knee arthroscopy is 'keyhole' surgery. Two or three small incisions or portals are made in the front of the knee to allow access for a specialised camera and instruments.

Preparation for Surgery

Every patient is unique. Dr Mandziak will discuss with you the suitability, benefits and risks of the procedure that are important to you as an individual.

Potential Risks

Operations are safer than ever, though some small risks of surgery are unavoidable. These include:

- Infection (approximately 1 in 1000 patients)
- Nerve or blood vessel injury (note: a small area of numbness around each incision is normal)
- Blood clots (deep vein thrombosis or pulmonary embolism)
- Stiffness
- Ongoing joint discomfort.

When Will I Go Home After My Operation?

Knee arthroscopy is usually performed as a daysurgery procedure, so you are admitted and discharged on the day of surgery.

What to expect after surgery?

SWELLING

Swelling is normal after surgery. After surgery on your knee, swelling is greatest for the first 6 weeks, but may persist to some degree for months. You may notice the swelling worsens throughout the day due to the effect of gravity and activity.

DISCOMFORT

Pain is a very individual experience, and each patient reports differing levels of discomfort. Some discomfort is unavoidable, however many different measures are taken to ensure you are as comfortable as possible.

What to expect after surgery? cont...

Dr Mandziak uses local anaesthetic techniques for reducing pain after knee arthroscopy. Patients often find ice packs are useful to help soothe the discomfort and swelling.

BLOOD CLOT PREVENTION

Blood clot risk is low following knee arthroscopy, as patients can move and walk soon after the procedure.

Simple exercises such as 'ankle pumps' and short walks further assist in preventing clot formation. Medications to thin the blood in order to prevent clots are generally not required after arthroscopy.

SUTURES AND INCISION CARE

Dr Mandziak routinely places one suture in each of your small incisions. A sterile waterproof dressing will be placed on your incision in the operating theatre, and ideally this stays on for 2 weeks (you can shower with this clear dressing intact). The small clear dressings are removed by the Orthopaedics SA nurse at your 2 week nurse checkup, and the sutures are then removed.

If you notice persistent discharge or oozing of fluid from your wound after leaving hospital, or have any other problems with your dressing you should telephone (08) 8267 8287 and ask to speak to an Orthopaedics SA nurse.

POST-OPERATIVE EXERCISES

Walking and gentle exercises are all most people need during their recovery from a knee arthroscopy.

Being able to stand and move your limb is important to reduce complications and maintain your muscle strength. In the early recovery it is important to walk short distances, but not overdo it with long walks or strenuous exercise. Some people may require physiotherapy.

SHOWERING

You may shower with the clear waterproof dressing intact on your knee. If the dressing comes off or water is getting onto your incisions please call us or arrange for a new dressing to be fitted. Avoid soaking your incisions in a bath, pool or spa for the first 2 weeks post-operatively.

Travel

It is safe for you to fly within a few days of your knee arthroscopy. If you do fly, go for short walks up the aisle regularly and keep your calf muscles pumping while seated, to help prevent deep vein thrombosis.

What Do I Do Once I'm Discharged From Hospital?

- Keep your clear waterproof dressing intact until your 2 week nurse check
- Oral pain tablets as directed
- Ice the joint (ice cubes wrapped in a tea towel; do not place ice directly on skin)
- Walk short distances, as much as is comfortable.

Post-Operative Follow Up

You will have an appointment 2 weeks after surgery for a progress and wound check with an Orthopaedics SA nurse and Dr Mandziak.

Further reviews may be required in some cases.



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APPOINTMENTS AND ENQUIRIES

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