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Instructions after Surgery

Patient Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Be sure to read "Information for My Patients Scheduled for Orthopaedic Surgery" and "The 10 Most Common Post-Operative Questions". If you still have questions call the office. After hours, call the service at (212) 408-1646. In an emergency, go to the nearest hospital or Beth Israel Medical Center's Emergency Department.

1. Call the office for an appointment to see my assistant *John J. Lichardi, RPA-C* for a check-up and suture removal. The visit should be about 10 days after your surgery.
2. I will call you after surgery to see how you are doing. Make sure you gave the correct number to my assistant.
3. It is normal to see some fluid or blood on the dressing. You may remove the dressing one or two days after your surgery. If there is drainage from the incision, apply Neosporin ointment and cover with dressings or band-aids. If drainage is excessive, call the office. For the knee, use an elastic/neoprene sleeve or ace bandage when walking to help reduce swelling.
4. Apply your cold-therapy device or an ice pack to the surgical site. Use this for 20 minutes at a time, several times a day. Elevation and ice will reduce the pain and swelling very effectively, especially once the dressing is off.
5. It is normal to have swelling and some bruising (black and blue) of the surgical site, leg or arm after surgery. By the time the sutures are ready to come out, there may be some local irritation around the sutures with swelling and redness. Some light, thin, yellow and/or bloody drainage is also common after surgery.
6. Despite great care, any incision can become infected. If the site becomes very red, swollen and painful, with drainage that looks like pus (thick, yellow, creamy material), call the office or go to an emergency department. If your temperature elevates to over 100°, take two Tylenol (acetaminophen) tablets every 4 hours. If temperature persists, call the office.
7. You may shower after the dressing is off. The incisions and sutures may get wet. After your shower, dry the surgical site and re-apply dressings as needed.
8. Begin moving the leg or arm as soon as possible and comfortable. For arthroscopic surgery of the knee, you may stop using the cane as soon as comfort permits, as early as a day or two after the operation. Put as much weight on the leg as possible. For simple arthroscopic surgery of the shoulder, you may remove the sling and begin active range of motion exercises. Patients with rotator cuff or labral repairs do not need physical therapy for the first 6 weeks and must remain in the sling except for showering, dressing and eating. Others should start exercises and physical therapy as soon as possible, as indicated in your post-operative instructions. Return to work and normal activities as soon as you are comfortable.
9. Resume your regular diet as tolerated. Start with liquids and light food first.
10. Take your pain killers and anti-inflammatory medication as prescribed.

Patient Signature _____

Steven F. Harwin, MD, FACS _____ (2-09)