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Orthopaedic Surgeon

Surgery of the Hip Joint

Arthroscopy · Joint Preservation · Replacement · Resurfacing

POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

HIP ARTHROSCOPY

Dressings and wound care

- Expect the bulky pad placed over your hip to become damp with the irrigation fluid used during the procedure. It is usual for the fluid to have a slight red tinge.
- 24 hours after the operation, remove the bulky pad and underlying dressings. You will see 2 – 4 small incisions, each with one stitch. Do not remove the stitches. At this time you can gently shower the operation site. Do not scrub or use soap on the wounds. Dry the region by gently dabbing before applying a band-aid or similar dressing over each stitch. After this, try to keep your wound clean and dry at all times, leaving the band-aids intact until your next clinic appointment.
- Do not use any ointments or lotions.
- Do not bath or submerge the incisions until the stitches are removed.
- If there is drainage from the incisions beyond 72 hours after the procedure, please contact the office.

Pain Control

- On discharge from hospital, you will be given a prescription for pain medications. Even if your hip feels relatively comfortable after the procedure, it is usually best to take analgesic tablets on a regular basis for the first
- 48 - 72 hours. After this time you can use paracetamol and/ or ibuprofen as required.
- Your hip joint has been injected with a local anaesthetic which will last for approximately 24 hours. As the local anaesthetic starts to wear off, it is not unusual to have an increase in discomfort for a couple of days.
- For the initial 48 hours after surgery, intermittent ice application can be helpful in reducing the swelling and discomfort. Ice should never be applied directly to the skin, and should be wrapped in a towel to be applied for 15 minute periods every 2 to 3 hours. Discontinue application of ice if it causes pain or discomfort.

Weight bearing and general activity

- Unless otherwise instructed, there are no restrictions regarding weight bearing on your operated hip. You are allowed to bear as much weight on your hip as desired immediately after surgery. Crutches are usually required for 3-5 days, and can be

discontinued when you feel ready. Some people find using a single crutch (used in the opposite hand to your operated hip) for a few extra days useful.

- Some patients are instructed to use crutches for 6 weeks and/or avoid impact activity for 3 months after surgery, depending on what procedures were necessary during the operation. Instructions for weight bearing are provided in your operation report. If you are unsure, please contact the office.
- Discomfort is often a good guide in determining your return to activities. While exercise is important, over-doing it too early can ultimately slow your recovery.
- Activities which are generally well tolerated 1-2 weeks after surgery include gentle bike riding and swimming. Avoid breast stroke. Gradually increase the amount of time spent performing these exercises.
- Running and twisting impact activities are generally not well tolerated for 6 weeks.
- After hip arthroscopy, 80% of competitive athletes return to match fitness within 16 weeks.

Work & driving

- Most patients are able to return to desk work 1 week after surgery. For more physically demanding employment, up to 6 weeks may be required.
- You can drive as soon as you are not requiring the use crutches or prescription analgesics. Driving is not permitted while taking preparations containing codeine.

Physiotherapy, rehabilitation & sports conditioning

- Physiotherapy is an essential part of your recovery after hip arthroscopy. You will usually start post-operative physiotherapy on the same day as your operation. Your physiotherapist will provide you with a progressive exercise program which will assist in regaining hip motion, flexibility, strength and function. Contact details for physiotherapists with experience in treating patients after hip arthroscopy can be provided.
- If you are unable to attend physiotherapy in Brisbane, you will be provided with some guidelines to assist your local therapist in your rehabilitation. Your physiotherapist will require a copy of your operation report.
- Patients wishing to return to sport or similar physical activities after hip arthroscopy are recommended to see a Sports Physician. A referral can be arranged at your first post-operative visit.

Review appointment

- You will need to be reviewed in the clinic 7-10 days after your operation. At this time your wounds will be inspected, stitches removed and the findings of your surgery will be explained. Arrangements for your ongoing rehabilitation will be made as required. If you do not already have a post-operative review date arranged, please contact the rooms.

Contact

- For non urgent advice and clinic appointments, please phone the rooms during office hours on 38319777. For emergencies Dr Weinrauch can be contacted on 0434237779, or alternatively present to your General Practitioner or the St Andrews Hospital Priority Emergency Centre.

This information handout has been written by Dr Patrick Weinrauch for the purposes of patient education. The details provided are of general nature only and do not substitute for professional recommendations based on an individual clinical assessment. 01/08.