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Partner In Care
OUTPATIENT EDUCATION



Discharge

- The partner in care is encouraged to be present while the RN reviews the discharge instructions with the patient
- Ask questions if you are unsure of anything and take notes if necessary
- Remember the patient may be on pain medication and may not remember the instructions in their entirety later
- Once home, keep the instructions close by for reference
- Secure needed telephone numbers for the surgeon's office, therapy, etc.
- **IT IS VERY IMPORTANT FOR THE PATIENT TO ADHERE TO THE DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS!**

Transfer Home

- Be ready to assist the patient for 5 to 7 days once they are home
- Put the pets up upon arrival then bring the patient into the house, once the patient is seated the pet can be let out
- Assist with anything the patient may need:
  - Medications
  - Icing the extremity
  - Elevation of extremity
  - In/Out of the shower
  - Carrying items
  - Transportation to doctor/PT visits

Pain Medication

- Encourage the patient to take pain medication when needed
- Watch to make sure they are not letting the pain get out of control
- Taking pain medication simply for recovery from the surgery should not allow for addiction to the medication
- Help them time their pain medication for about one hour prior to exercise or therapy
- Assist them to slowly wean off the narcotic medication to over-the-counter pain relievers such as Tylenol as the pain decreases
- For a refill of pain medication, call the pharmacy
- If a narcotic is refilled, someone will need to pick up the paper prescription from the surgeon's office and take it to the pharmacy to be filled
- Do not let the patient drive while taking pain medication

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Safety

- Maintaining the safety of the patient is paramount in their recovery process
- Falls can cause significant injury and at times be a life changing set-back
- Encourage the patient to stay off grassy areas, go slow when climbing stairs, remove all throw-rugs while using a walker or cane, use good lighting at night, live on one floor if possible, be aware of loose flooring
- Tie a bag or basket onto the front of the walker for carrying cell-phones, eyeglasses, drinks, snacks, etc.
- Do not allow patient to drive until the surgeon allows



Watch for Complications

Infection – call the surgeon
- Increased redness, heat, swelling, pain, and yellow, foul smelling drainage at the incision site

Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) – call the surgeon
- Redness, swelling, heat, and pain in the calf area of one or both legs (out of proportion to normal pain and swelling)

Pulmonary Embolism (PE) – call 911
- Sudden chest or upper back pain, shortness of breath

Neurovascular damage – call the surgeon
- Inability to move foot (feet)

Pale/cold foot/leg(s) – call the surgeon
- Increased Pain in foot (feet)
- Decreased pulses

RESOURCES
If you or the patient have questions, please feel free to contact the Total Joint Coordinator at (859) 301-0405 or via email at askortho@stelizabeth.com.

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