

Care After Sports Medicine Orthopedic Surgery

Steps to follow after an arthroscopy or other sports medicine surgery.

What can my child eat after surgery?

It is OK for your child to have something light to eat when they are hungry. Examples of foods that are OK are clear liquids, toast, crackers, yogurt, soup and fruit. If food stays down, then your child may eat what they usually eat. It is important to drink plenty of liquids to help avoid constipation.

How do I help manage my child's pain?

Pain and discomfort are normal after surgery. You know your child best. We encourage you to take an active part in your child's recovery. Please talk with your child's care team about how your child shows that they are hurting. In addition to medicine prescribed for pain, encourage coping tools, like books and games, to treat pain and provide support. Pain gets better for most children after the first few days.

Refer to our handout, "Pain Medicine after Arthroscopic Surgery" (seattlechildrens.org/pdf/PE3071.pdf) for more information and to keep track of the pain medicine you have given your child.

Swelling

Your child may have swelling around the surgery site. Swelling causes increased pressure in the area of surgery and increases pain. To reduce pain and swelling, elevate the surgical site above the heart.

Cryo/Cuff

- ❑ Your child has a Cryo/Cuff. The cooling cuff circulates cold water around the joint and helps reduce pain and swelling. The ice in the canister will need to be refilled with ice and water about every 6 hours. Exchange the water in the cuff every hour when your child is awake. For best results, leave cuff filled and disconnect hose. The cuff should be full but also comfortable. If your child feels like the cuff is too full, you may connect the hose to the cuff, open the valve on the cooler, and lower the cooler to let some of the water drain back into the cooler.

Steps to exchange the water in the cooling cuff:

1. Connect hose to cuff.
2. Open air valve on top of canister.
3. Raise canister 15 to 18 inches above the joint, allowing water in the canister to exchange with warmer water in the cuff.
4. Keep the canister raised 15 inches above the joint for 20 minutes, then close all of the valves at the top of the canister.
5. Disconnect the hose.

To Learn More

- Orthopedics Clinic - 206-987-2109
- Seattle Children's Operator
206-987-2000 (evenings and weekends)
- Ask your child's healthcare provider
- seattlechildrens.org

Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line, 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.

This video by DME Direct describes how to use the Cryo/Cuff:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=H3iDzAcrWJ8

When can my child get wet?

Keep the bandages (dressing) completely dry for ____ days.

After _____ days, a shower is OK if the incisions are dry and are not weeping (leaking body fluid). Your child should avoid soaking the surgical site under water. No bath, hot tub, or swimming until instructed.

How should I take care of my child's surgery site?

Your child's healthcare team will check the box next to the steps you should follow.

- Leave the surgery site alone until your follow-up in the clinic.
- After showering for the first time:
 - Cover the incisions with gauze
 - Cover the incisions with Band-Aids
 - Wrap the leg with an ACE bandage from mid-calf to mid-thigh.
 - Wrap the elbow with an ACE bandage from mid-forearm to mid-arm.
 - If you were given a Cryo/Cuff for a knee, ankle, or elbow surgery, put it on top of the ACE bandage. For a shoulder surgery, put it on top of clothing such as a t-shirt. If you were fit with a brace, put the brace back on top of the Cryo/Cuff.

Do not put ointments on the surgery site regardless of how incision was closed.

- Steri-Strips were placed over the cut (incision)
 - Steri-Strips are thin pieces of tape that are on top of dissolvable stitches under the skin.
 - Leave Steri-Strips on until they fall off on their own.
 - Cut (incision) is closed with skin glue (Dermabond)
 - Keep the skin clean with soap and water.
 - The glue will flake off on its own after about a week.
 - Follow the "Cast Care" guidelines that will be given to you.
 - _____
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How active can my child be?

For the first 4 to 6 hours at home after surgery, your child should do only quiet activities, with an adult keeping watch. After this period, it is OK for your child to be more active. It is best to listen to your child about what feels OK. Your child will tend to limit their own activity if they feel uncomfortable.

Your child's activity level will depend on the type of surgery they had. Follow the instructions checked below:

- Your child may start exercises given to you by the physical therapist starting the day of surgery. If the exercises are too uncomfortable, try again the next day. Sometimes movement helps decrease pain.

- Your child has a knee brace or sling. It may be removed for therapy exercises and bathing, but otherwise needs to be on. Do not adjust the settings.
- Your child may put as much weight on the leg as they can. Use crutches if needed.
- Your child may put only ____% of their body weight on the leg. Use crutches for help.
- Your child may not put any weight on the leg. Use crutches.
- Your child may not lift or carry objects with the arm. Use the sling until your follow-up appointment.

All casts, splints, braces, slings, crutches, abduction pillows, etc., are to be worn as instructed. Follow the guidelines that were given to you.

When can my child go back to school/work or drive a car?

Most children will stay home the day of surgery and the day after surgery. This gives them time to recover from the procedure and from anesthesia. It is OK for your child to return to school when they are comfortable and when they are no longer taking strong pain medication, like oxycodone.

If your child drives a car, they should not drive for the first 72 hours after surgery or while they are taking medicines prescribed for pain, like Oxycodone or Diazepam. It is OK to drive if they are only taking mild pain medicines, like Tylenol or Aleve.

Some children will need to be excused from PE, sports and rough play. Please check with your surgeon to see if these activities are OK for your child or if they need to wait.

When should I call my child's healthcare team?

Please call us if your child has any of these warning signs:

- Fever of 101.5° F or higher
- Redness on the skin spreading from the incision area
- New bleeding or oozing blood or pus under the bandage dressing or at the incision
- Very bad or constant pain, or pain that gets worse at the surgery site, even after giving pain medicine according to directions and on time.
- Vomits more than once
- Chest pain / shortness of breath
- Calf swelling and pain

Call the Orthopedics Clinic at 206-987-2109 during weekday business hours. On evenings and weekends, call the operator at Seattle Children's at 206-987-2000. Ask the operator to page the orthopedic resident on call.

When will my child need to be seen again?

Your child is scheduled for a follow-up appointments on:

Ortho: _____

Physical Therapy: _____

Please call the Orthopedics Clinic to confirm your appointment time.

Your child will be seen at the following location:

- Seattle Children's Main Campus
4800 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle, WA 98105
Level 6, Ocean zone entrance
- Bellevue Clinic
1500 116 Ave. NE, Bellevue, WA 98004

Partner handout:

Pain Medicine after Arthroscopic Surgery
(seattlechildrens.org/pdf/PE3071.pdf)