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Lower Extremity Home Instruction after Surgery

Wound Care: After surgery you will have steri-strips and a cotton dressing over your incisions. Keep the cotton dressings on for at least 24 hours then remove. Leave the steri-strips on for 10-14 days. Your therapist will use a special lotion to remove the yellow solution from your skin. This solution does not clean off with soap and water. Watch incisions for excessive bleeding or unusual drainage. If you have excessive swelling or pain, call your surgeon.

Bathing/Showering Guidelines: Keep your incisions dry until they are healed. Steri-strips should be covered with waterproof bandages before you bathe or shower. Remove waterproof bandages after shower to allow air to get to the incisions. These can be purchased at a discount store.

Ice/Polar Pack Use: Keep ice on for 10-20 minutes at a time, 5 times a day. Polar packs can be used as frequently as possible. Elevate your leg above your heart while using the ice/polar pack to aid in decreasing swelling. Use pillows under your entire thigh, calf, and foot to keep the leg straight during elevation. Be sure to use a towel between your skin and the pack to prevent frostbite.

Compression: Do not compress your leg with ACE wraps, neoprene wraps, etc. after surgery.

Exercises: You may start the exercises the same day of your surgery, if not start them by the following morning. These are important to maintain strength, decrease stiffness, and prevent blood clots. If an exercise is excessively painful, discontinue until next physical therapy visit.

Other: