

Knee Injuries

An information guide



Knee Injuries

This leaflet contains discharge advice following your attendance to the Accident & Emergency Department (A&E) or Urgent Treatment Centre (UTC).

Rest

Partial rest is recommended – you will be advised by the member of staff who has treated you. The aim is to allow some general activity, such as gentle walking. However, you must avoid any activity involving your knee which could cause a further injury. For example, you should avoid contact sports until your knee has fully recovered.

Total rest is rarely needed, as controlled exercise and movement help the knee to heal.

Ice

Ice should be applied immediately after your injury, but can also be useful later to help your recovery. The benefits of ice therapy include a reduction in pain, swelling and muscle spasm. A bag of frozen peas, crushed ice cubes or a cold pack can be used. This should always be placed in a damp towel and never directly onto the skin. After five minutes the area should be checked for an ice burn (excessive redness) then left for 20 – 30 minutes. Ice can be applied every 2 hours.

Never apply cold to an area where you can't tell the difference between hot and cold. This could happen, for example, if you have a previous nerve injury, or stroke.

Elevation

Elevation of the affected leg helps to limit the bleeding in the first 72 hours following your injury. Elevation and compression should not be applied at the same time.

Pain killers

You may find painkillers such as paracetamol helpful. Also, 'anti-inflammatory' medicines such as ibuprofen (in tablet or gel form) may help, especially in the first 3 days. However, there are a number of medical conditions which make this treatment less safe – check the packaging, or ask a doctor or pharmacist, for details if you are not sure.

Knee exercises

These exercises are aimed at increasing joint movement, preventing stiffness, increasing muscle strength, reducing pain, and improving function.

The exercises will be most effective if practised 'little and often', i.e. repeating a few times every hour, and at least once every 2 hours. Try to build up your exercises to 10 repetitions

You may have been given crutches to help you walk normally, it is important that you put as much weight through your injured leg as possible and walk with a straight knee to aid the healing process.

- Static quadriceps contraction. Press the back of your knee into the floor/bed. Keep your toes pulled up towards the body. Hold for 5 seconds and then relax
- Tighten thigh muscles as in Exercise 1. While holding the muscles tight, lift the leg 10 inches from the floor/bed, hold for 5 seconds and then lower slowly. **Do not** perform this exercise if it causes back pain.
- Lie face down with legs straight, bend affected knee as far as possible and then lower gently.

Important

If your knee does not seem to be improving by 2 weeks after the injury, or it is not significantly better by 6 – 8 weeks, you should be re-assessed. For this you should visit your GP.

If English is not your first language and you need help, please contact the Interpretation and Translation Service

Jeśli angielski nie jest twoim pierwszym językiem i potrzebujesz pomocy, skontaktuj się z działem tłumaczeń ustnych i pisemnych

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