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# Patellar Tendon Repair

## REPAIR / RECONSTRUCTION — POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

**Patient** _____ **Surgery date** _____ **Side** ☐ Right ☐ Left

**PROTECT THE REPAIR — THE TENDON TAKES ABOUT 12 WEEKS TO HEAL**

- Wear the brace **locked straight** whenever you are walking or standing, and while sleeping, for **6 weeks**.
- **Do not** bend the knee past the limit for your stage (below). Never bend the knee while standing or bearing weight.
- **Do not** kick the leg straight or do straight leg raises out of the brace.
- Rest with the **heel** on a pillow and the knee straight — never with a pillow behind the knee.

## MEDICATION

### Pain medication

Narcotic/opioid medications (oxycodone, hydrocodone) are habit-forming. If needed, you will receive a one-time prescription sized for your surgery. Most patients need them for only 2–3 days; taking them longer than 6 days significantly increases the risk of dependence. **Do not drive, drink alcohol, or make important decisions while taking them.**

**Take 1–2 tablets every 4–6 hours as needed for pain.**

☐ Oxycodone ☐ Percocet (oxycodone/acetaminophen) ☐ Norco (hydrocodone/acetaminophen)

☐ Other _____

### Tylenol (acetaminophen)

☐ You may add Tylenol 325 mg, 2 tablets every 4–6 hours. Do not exceed 3,000 mg in 24 hours *from all sources*.

☐ Do NOT take extra Tylenol — your prescribed pain medication already contains acetaminophen.

### Anti-inflammatories (NSAIDs: ibuprofen/Advil/Motrin, naproxen/Aleve, meloxicam/Mobic)

NSAIDs can slow tendon and bone healing and increase bleeding risk; they are approved only for specific patients.

☐ NSAIDs approved ☐ NSAIDs **NOT** approved

### Blood clot prevention

☐ **Aspirin 81 mg once daily** for 4 weeks

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☐ Lovenox _____

☐ Continue your home blood thinner

☐ No blood clot medication needed for your procedure

### Nausea & constipation

You have prescriptions for **Zofran** (nausea — fill only if you have severe nausea) and **Colace** (stool softener while taking narcotics). Walking, fluids, fiber, and prune juice also help; MiraLAX is OK if no bowel movement in 2–3 days.

Other: _____

## ACTIVITY & HOME EXERCISES

### Ice / cold therapy

☐ **Cooling unit:** use in 4-hour intervals with 30-minute breaks for the first 1–2 weeks, then as needed. Keep a layer between the pad and your skin. **Do NOT** leave on overnight.

☐ **Ice packs:** 20 minutes on / 20 minutes off as needed for the first 2 weeks. Ice works through thick bandages even if you can't feel the cold.

**Do NOT use heat** on the surgical area.

**Nerve block:** If you had a nerve block, your leg may be numb or weak for up to 24 hours. Use your crutches/walker and brace, have someone with you when you first get up, and start your pain medication before the block wears off.

- Minimize activity the day of surgery. Elevate the leg above heart level for the first several days.
- **Ankle pumps:** 20 every hour you are awake.
- **Quad sets** (gently tighten the thigh with the knee straight in the brace), 10 reps, 3 times a day, unless told otherwise.
- Gentle bending only within your allowed range, seated or lying down, with the brace unlocked to that limit.
- **Driving:** not in the brace or while taking narcotics. Left knee (automatic car): often 2–4 weeks. Right knee: typically 6–8 weeks.
- **Work:** desk work with the leg elevated often in 1–2 weeks.

## WEIGHT BEARING & BENDING LIMITS

**Weight bearing as tolerated with the brace locked straight**, using crutches until you can walk safely without them.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Weeks 0–2** | Brace unlocked to 0–30° for bending exercises only (seated or lying). |
| **Weeks 2–4** | 0–60° |
| **Weeks 4–6** | 0–90° |
| **Weeks 6+** | Brace unlocked for walking once you have good quadriceps control, as directed by your therapist. |

*Your surgeon may adjust these limits based on the repair:* _____

## BRACE

Brace locked in full extension (0°) for walking, standing, and sleeping for **6 weeks**. Unlock only for bending exercises within your allowed range.

## SHOWERING & DRESSING CARE

### Showering

- You may shower **2 days after surgery**. Let soapy water run over the incision; do not scrub it. Pat dry.
- **No baths, pools, or hot tubs** for 3 weeks, and until the incision is fully healed.

### Dressing

☐ **Waterproof dressing (e.g., Aquacel):** you may shower over it. Leave on for **7 days**, then remove and cover the incision with a dry dressing or leave it open if dry.

☐ **Gauze dressing:** keep it dry. Remove at **7 days** and apply a new dry dressing.

- Some light bloody drainage is normal. Leave steri-strips or skin glue in place.
- No lotions, ointments, or creams on the incision.

## PROCEDURES PERFORMED

☐ Patellar Tendon repair

☐ Patellar Tendon reconstruction with graft: _____

☐ Augmentation (suture tape / cerclage)

☐ Other: _____

## DIET

- Eat lightly the day of surgery, then advance to your regular diet. Drink plenty of non-alcoholic, caffeine-free fluids.
- A well-balanced, protein-rich diet supports healing. Avoid new supplements in the early recovery period unless cleared by your surgeon.
- If you have diabetes, check your blood sugar more often — surgery and steroids given during anesthesia can raise it.

## PHYSICAL THERAPY

- ☐ You have been given a physical therapy prescription and protocol (in your post-op packet). Call a convenient location to schedule — therapy should begin within **7–10 days**. Bring the prescription and protocol to your first visit.
- ☐ You will NOT start therapy before your first post-op visit. You will receive PT instructions at that visit.

## FOLLOW-UP

Your first post-operative appointment: **Date** _____ **Time** _____ **Location** _____

- To change your post-operative visit, call **469.800.7200**.
- Pain medication refills: call Monday–Friday, 8:30 am–3:00 pm. Allow 24–48 hours. Narcotic refills are not available after hours or on weekends.

**WHEN TO CALL US — 469.800.7200, DAY OR NIGHT**

- Fever over 101.5°F, or chills
- Redness spreading from the incision, red streaks, foul odor, or drainage that keeps increasing after day 3
- Calf pain, tenderness, or swelling
- Pain or swelling not relieved by your medication, ice, and elevation
- Foot or toes that is cold, pale, or blue, or numbness/weakness that is worsening (mild numbness around the incisions is expected)
- Bleeding that soaks through the dressing

If you cannot reach the on-call surgeon promptly and you are concerned, go to the nearest Emergency Room.

**CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY FOR CHEST PAIN OR SHORTNESS OF BREATH.**

## SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS

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**Please read these instructions carefully before calling the office — most common questions are answered here. Thank you!**