



PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET

Knee Arthroscopy

Overview

Arthroscopy (also known as keyhole surgery) of the knee is usually performed to diagnose and treat internal knee problems such as cartilage tears. It is performed through two 'keyholes' or portals approximately 5mm across. One portal is to pass a high-definition fibre optic camera and the other to pass very fine surgical instruments. Most procedures are carried out under general anaesthetic and will mean a day case visit to hospital. Occasionally you may require an overnight stay for medical reasons.

What to expect when having a knee arthroscopy

On the day of your surgery, you will initially meet the nursing staff who will get you changed and do the required checks on your health (blood pressure pulse etc.) on that day. You will then have a brief chat with your anaesthetist to ensure your optimal safety for the anaesthetic. It is important to tell them all your relevant medical history and whether you have any allergies to medications or have had any problems with anaesthetics in the past. Mr Bourke or Mr Kucheria will then meet you once again to ensure all your questions have been answered and will place a black pen mark on your leg to be operated on. This is an important part of our on-going safety procedures. Your surgeon will then ask you sign a consent form which is a record for the hospital that you understand the procedure being carried out and the potential risks and complications.

Admission to hospital – you will be admitted to hospital 1-3 hours before your scheduled operation time. This is to allow the medical staff time to get you ready for your operation and for the operating theatres to get the equipment ready. On some occasions, there are delays in theatres for technical or surgical reasons so you should be prepared for a longer wait.

Risks and complications

All operations carry small risks. The risks associated with arthroscopy of the knee are uncommon but can occur. The most important of these are:

- Infection (1/500)
- Stiffness of the knee
- Numbness of the skin around the keyholes (usually temporary, rarely permanent)
- Nerve or vessel damage

prolonging an active life

www.castleviewclinic.com



- Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) & Pulmonary Embolus (PE) – if you have had a blood clot before, have a high Body Mass Index (BMI) or have a family history of blood clots we will usually recommend temporary cover to reduce the risks (usually an injection of heparin)
- On-going pain
- Medial collateral ligament damage
- Anaesthetic risks (your anaesthetist will discuss these with you separately).

Knee arthroscopy surgery – outline of the procedure

Once you are safely anaesthetised your knee will be washed with antiseptic solution, which may stain the skin pink or brown for a few days. A tourniquet is then applied to the thigh to prevent bleeding during the operation. The leg and knee may also be shaved at the front to optimise that cleaning process. Generally, most procedures last 10-15 minutes if straightforward but you will be away from your room for much longer than that as there is also anaesthetic time, set-up time and then 10-20 minutes in recovery. Longer procedures such as cartilage repair may last up to 45 minutes.

At the end of the operation, the small puncture wounds will be closed with steristrips (and occasionally with sutures), the knee is then wrapped up with a sterile, stretchy bandage.

Recovery

After the surgery, you will be taken to the recovery room and eventually back to the ward. You will be given an instruction sheet outlining your post-operative care and also a photo or a video of your taken procedure. Detailed findings of your surgery will be given to you at your post-operative appointment which will be made for you approximately 14 days following the surgery.

Discharge from hospital

- You will be required to stay in hospital for at least 2-3 hours following your procedure for safety reasons to ensure the anaesthetic has worn off and there has been no initial complication
- You must have someone available to drive you home from hospital
- You must not operate machinery or drive a car for 24 hours after your procedure
- You should have a responsible adult with you at home for at least the first 24 hours.

Early recovery period

- In most cases, you will be fully mobile (walking without crutches) from the day you leave hospital. It is important to rest with the leg up, particularly in the first 48 hours to prevent



swelling and on-going bleeding

- Try to minimize activity in the first two weeks to allow the knee to heal. The wounds will heal in 10-14 days. We advise you leave the dressings undisturbed until review at your post-operative appointment. The dressings are waterproof but it is advisable to protect them when you shower with a few wraps of simple kitchen clingfilm or there are ready made protective garments that can be purchased
- In certain cases, (if micro fracture or cartilage repair has been performed) your surgeon may ask you to be non-weight bearing on crutches for a set period of time. This will be made clear to you by your surgeon and the physiotherapist before you discharge.

What to do if the wounds bleed?

- Bleeding after knee arthroscopy is quite common and is usually only a very small amount. Most of the time it will stop on its own. The knee is expanded at the time of surgery with salty water (saline solution), a small amount of this remains in the knee after surgery and can leak out through the portals in the first 24-48 hours. It will be blood stained if it leaks out and can soak into the dressing.

Steps to follow if bleeding occurs:

1. Sit down or lie down and elevate the leg to the to the height of your hips and try not to bend the knee for 30-40 minutes
2. Apply pressure to the wound with a firm bandage or dressing
3. Apply ice on top of the bandage
4. Once the bleeding stops the dressings if soaked through can be changed for fresh ones. You will be provided with spare dressings to take home. Extra dressings can be purchased from most chemists/pharmacies.
5. If the bleeding doesn't stop, please telephone the ward.

Post-operative appointment

It is important that you attend this appointment usually scheduled 14 days after surgery. It will allow your surgeon to check you wounds and the recovery of the knee. He can then discuss the diagnosis, findings and on-going management with you.



Contact Details

Mr Henry Bourke
Consultant Orthopaedic &
Specialist Knee Surgeon
T: 01753 660630
E: mrbourke@castleviewclinic.com

Mr Rakesh Kucheria
Consultant Orthopaedic &
Specialist Hip & Knee Surgeon
T: 01753 830409
E: mrkucheria@castleviewclinic.com

BMI The Princess Margaret Hospital - Spire Thames Valley Hospital – BMI Bishops Wood Hospital – The Bridge Clinic

prolonging an active life

www.castleviewclinic.com