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Knee Arthroscopy Instruction Sheet

1. Definition: A knee arthroscopy is a minor surgical procedure in which two 1 cm incisions are made in the front of the knee to allow visualization and treatment of knee disorders with the use of a specialized camera called an arthroscope. Typical disorders treated with the arthroscope include meniscal tears, loose bodies and cartilage defects. Performing a procedure arthroscopically decreases pain, lessens blood loss and allows for quicker recovery times. A knee arthroscopy is usually performed in an outpatient surgery center.

2. Pre-op: Once Dr. Laster and you have decided to proceed with a knee arthroscopy, a surgery date will be scheduled by Dr. Laster's assistant, Allana Hunt. Dr. Laster will see you one week prior to your surgery for a pre-op appointment. This visit will allow you to ask any questions you may have regarding the surgery. You will be given a home exercise sheet and a prescription for pain medication as well as crutches. Allana will arrange for any preoperative labs or tests that need to be completed prior to the surgery.

3. Day of surgery: The typical arrival time to the hospital or surgery center is two hours prior to your actual surgery time. Be sure to wear comfortable, loose fitting clothes. Please do not apply any creams or lotions to the operative knee on the day of surgery. One of the staff at the facility will check you in and you will change into a gown. An intravenous (IV) line will be started in one of your veins and you will be given a pre-operative antibiotic. Please let the staff know if you have any drug allergies. You will have a chance to talk to the anesthesiologist at this time. Typically you will be given a general anesthetic for the arthroscopy. Dr. Laster will also see you prior to your surgery to mark your operative knee with a pen. You will then be taken back to the operating room and the arthroscopy will be performed. The procedure should last about 30 to 60 minutes.

4. Post op: Once the arthroscopy has been completed you will be taken to the recovery room. Dr. Laster will meet any family members or friends in the waiting room at this time to discuss the findings of the case. Usually he will show pictures taken during the procedure. The recovery room nurse will let family know when it is okay to come back to the recovery room. You will be in recovery for one to two hours before you are discharged to home.

5. Aftercare: You will have an ace wrap on your knee which can be removed two days after your arthroscopy (i.e. if your surgery was on Friday you may remove the wrap on Sunday). You will have two sutures over the incisions which should be covered with band-aids at this time. You may shower on the same day as you remove the dressing. Please shower with the band-aids on and replace the wet band-aids after you shower. Knee exercises from the sheet should be started the day after your surgery. Usually there are no weight bearing restrictions post operatively but you may require crutches for several days. You may drive when you feel you are safe to do so. You will follow up with Dr. Laster in the office 10-14 days after your surgery. Sutures will be removed at this time and a decision will be made regarding formal physical therapy. Straight line activities are allowed at ten days and all restrictions are lifted by six weeks.

Questions? Please call or email:

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