

## Subchondroplasty Postoperative Guidelines

The following are guidelines for Subchondroplasty and progression is both criteria based and patient specific. Phases and time frames are designed to give the clinician a general sense of progression. Typically, we begin formal physical therapy at 14 days. The program should balance the aspects of tissue healing and appropriate interventions to maximize flexibility, strength, and pain-free performance of functional activities.

### **POST – OPERATIVE PHASE I (WEEKS 0-2)** **\*\*MAXIMUM PROTECTION PHASE\*\***

#### **GOALS:**

- Patient education
- Pain control
- Protection of the post-surgical knee
- Restore normal knee extension
- Eliminate effusion (swelling)
- Restore leg control and Range of Motion

#### **PRECAUTIONS:**

- Knee TROM Brace for all weight bearing activities
- Partial Weightbearing unlocked in brace with crutches
- MAY remove knee brace for shower. Please keep leg straight while seated in a chair

#### **TREATMENT STRATEGIES:**

Full extension is obtained by doing the following exercises:

##### 1) Passive knee extension.

- Sit in a chair and place your heel on the edge of a stool or chair.
- Relax the thigh muscles.
- Let the knee sag under its own weight until maximum extension is achieved.

##### 2) Heel Props:

- Place the heel on a rolled towel making sure the heel is propped high enough to lift the thigh off table.
- Allow the leg to relax into extension. Do this 3-4 times a day for 10 - 15 minutes at a time.

Bending (Flexion) is obtained by doing the following exercises:

##### 1) Passive knee bend- Sit on the edge of a table and let the knee bend under the influence of gravity.

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2) Wall slides are used to further increase bending - Lie on the back with the involved foot on the wall and allow the foot to slide down the wall by bending the knee. Use other leg to apply pressure downward



Figure 3: Wall Slide: Allow the knee to gently slide down

3) Heel slides are used to gain final degrees of flexion.

- Pull the heel toward the buttocks, flexing the knee. Hold for 5 seconds.
- Straighten the leg by sliding the heel downward and hold for 5 seconds.



Figure 4: Heel slide - leg is pulled toward the buttocks

### Activities

- Do not engage in activities which increase your knee pain and swelling over the first 7-10 days after surgery.
- Avoid long periods of sitting (without your leg elevated) or long distance travel for up to 2 weeks after surgery.



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- You may return to sedentary work (only) or school 5-7 days after surgery if the pain is tolerable.
- It is important to get back your motion after surgery. Part of the success of the surgery is based on how well the rehab goes afterwards.
- You may walk as much as you can with the crutches but try not to overdue it in the first week
- If you are experiencing worsening pain please let Dr. Shah know.
- Sleeping – if you are having trouble with sleep you may want to try an over the counter Benadryl before bed.

## Preventing Blood Clots

- You will be prescribed a medication from the hospital that you will need to take for 3 weeks after surgery. Most often this will be Aspirin 325 mg by mouth once a day.
- Please wear your compression stockings on both legs as much as possible for the two weeks after surgery.
- Daily exercises such as getting up, walking, and other sitting exercises such as ankle pumps help to reduce the risk of blood clots.
- If you have a predisposition to blood clots or a previous history of blood clots in your family please make sure that Dr. Shah is aware as this may change your medications.

## Swelling

- It is important to use the compression stockings on your legs to help decrease swelling. These should be worn almost the entire day. You may also use the ACE bandage from surgery and wrap it around the surgical area. These can be removed for showers, changing clothes, and to give the skin a break if necessary for a few hours each day. You should wear them for two weeks after your surgery. They help to decrease swelling and also decrease your risk of getting a blood clot in your leg.
- Elevating the leg above the level of your heart (chest), particularly while sleeping, can also help to reduce swelling. You may put a few pillows underneath your foot and ankle while sleeping.

## Physical Therapy

- Formal physical therapy will start after your first post-operative visit. This is usually 1-2 weeks after your surgery. You will be given a prescription at that time.
- Physical therapy is usually 2-3 times per week and will help you progress in terms of range of motion and strengthening with the goal of restoring you back to full painless activities.

Patient Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Physician's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ M.D. Date: \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_