

## **KNEE ARTHROSCOPY – PATIENT INFORMATION – MR S. WHITE**

You have been listed for a knee arthroscopy. This operation is designed to reduce pain or locking of your knee. At times it is used to assess whether your knee may be suitable for more extensive surgery in the future, to determine the cause of pain, or to try and improve the kneecap motion.

Most arthroscopies are performed as a day-case. Occasionally an overnight stay may be required.

The operation usually involves 2-3 small scars around your knee. These will often have 1 stitch in each scar after surgery that will require removal approximately 10-12 days after surgery.

### **Complications after surgery**

Complications can occur after surgery.  
In general arthroscopy carries a very small risk of complications.

There is a small risk of a reaction or problem with the anaesthetic. This varies depending on your pre-existing medical conditions.

#### Thromboembolic disease

There is a risk of a thrombosis or clot developing in a deep vein (DVT).

There is a very small chance of the clot spreading to the lung (Pulmonary Embolus). This is much more severe but fortunately rarer.

The best way to reduce your risk of these is to aim to perform surgery as a day-case, and for you to mobilise as soon as possible after surgery.

#### Infection

Infection after arthroscopy is fortunately very rare. It can be mild requiring tablet antibiotics or severe requiring further surgery.

#### Nerve/Blood vessel injury

There are major blood vessels and nerves around the knee. There is a very small risk of injury to these.

#### Pain

The scars may be uncomfortable for a few days. You should aim to take painkillers for a few days to allow you to exercise your knee.

#### Bruising/Swelling

A degree of bruising or swelling of the knee is to be expected. If a procedure called a lateral release has been performed, the swelling can be more dramatic and can take 2-3 weeks to settle. We will usually have discussed if this is necessary prior to surgery. Approximately 1 in 10 patients can get dramatic bruising. This does not normally affect your recovery and is not generally a cause for concern.

### Non-improvement

There is a chance that the arthroscopy may not make much difference to your pain. This is more common if there is underlying arthritis in your knee. Further surgery may have to be considered in the future.

### Scars

The scars may remain thickened or tender for a few months but this usually settles with time. Massage with some moisturising cream such as E45 can be helpful to settle tender scars.

### Recurrence

Tears of cartilage in the knee can occur again in the future.

### Recovery period

The length of time taken to notice improvement in your knee after arthroscopy varies depending on how long the condition has been present in your knee. For example after injuries to the cartilage, the muscles alter their function and can take weeks-months to retrain following arthroscopy. A course of physiotherapy may be organised following your out-patient review.

In general most people are walking reasonably well after a few days. You may prefer to use crutches for a couple of days. Driving should be reasonable after 5-6 days.

I recommend 1-2 weeks off work depending on the nature of your occupation.

These are averages, and some patients recover quicker and some conditions take longer to settle.