



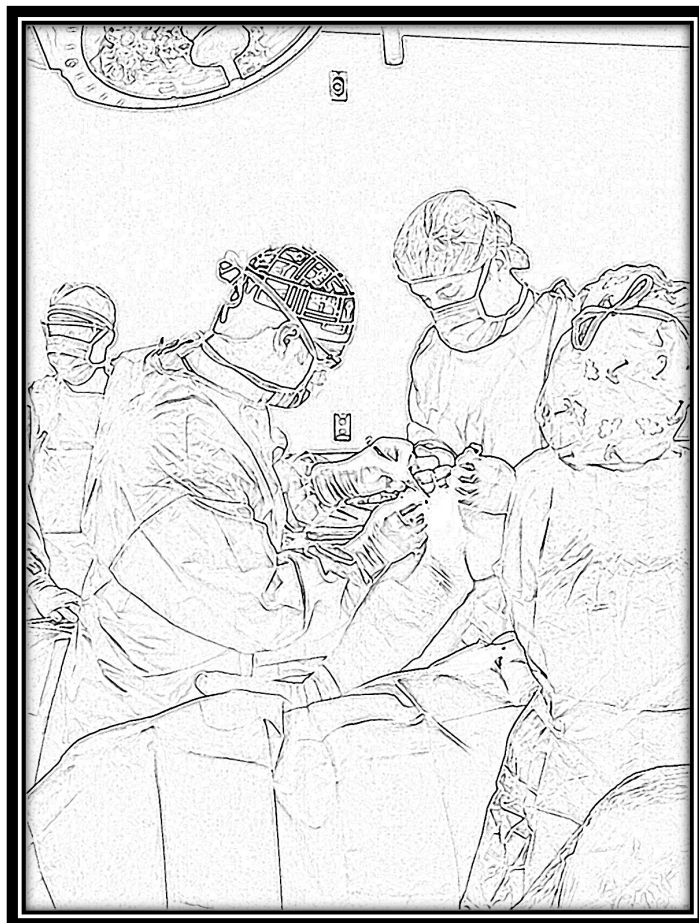
KNEE ARTHROSCOPY - Dr. John W. Hinchey

BACKGROUND

Dr. Hinchey treats a variety of knee conditions arthroscopically through two to three small incisions. Meniscus tears are very common and trimming the torn piece of meniscus out typically resolves most pain, swelling, or locking caused by the tear. Sometimes for certain tears in younger patients, Dr. Hinchey will repair the meniscus with small stitches.

Cartilage restoration surgery is more involved and sometimes requires a larger incision to expose the knee joint. Based on the size of the lesion, Dr. Hinchey may perform microfracture, cartilage transplantation, or stem cell implantation. The purpose of all these procedures is to restore the normal cartilage of the knee and to reduce pain and swelling.

Despite these being routine operations for Dr. Hinchey, we realize this a major ordeal for you, and you may have many questions.





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NIGHT BEFORE SURGERY

Please do not eat or drink anything after midnight. You should receive a call from our surgery scheduler and/or the hospital confirming your arrival time. Please see the “night before surgery instructions” and “medications” sheets in your surgery folder for further details.

DAY OF SURGERY

Again, do not eat or drink anything in the morning. You may take blood pressure, thyroid, or ADHD medicines or birth control pills with a sip of water. If you are diabetic, DO NOT take your medication and monitor your blood glucose closely.

Please arrive 2 hours prior to your scheduled surgery time, Dr. Hinchey’s office will inform you of the specific time. This gives the surgery center time to get you checked in and ready for surgery

Anesthesia - Dr. Hinchey uses a group of anesthesiologists who are excellent and he fully trusts. You will need to be asleep for the surgery, but a full intubation is not required. The anesthesiologist may offer you a nerve block, meaning that when you wake up, you will feel little or no pain. Do not worry if you feel numbness around your knee or down into the foot.

Medications - Dr. Hinchey will prescribe a narcotic pain medication that you can take every 4 hours, two pills if needed, for the first few days. He also recommends that you take Aleve, 2 pills in the morning and 2 at night for the first 3-4 days after the surgery. (Yes the bottle says 1 pill, but 2 is prescription strength). If the Aleve is enough, you can stop the narcotic pain meds.

Take the medications WITH FOOD, especially the pain pills.

Staying ahead of the pain is important. **DO NOT go to sleep for the night without taking a pain pill or two**, if not you may wake up in the middle of the night with pain. Typically, narcotics are only necessary for the first few days.

Diet - You may eat normally after the surgery, but Dr. Hinchey recommends starting light with soup, crackers, or milk. Once this is tolerated you may resume your regular diet. Nausea can occur after anesthesia, but should resolve after the first 24 hours. Constipation can be a side effect of the pain medications. Over-the-counter laxatives can be useful for this, or Dr. Hinchey can provide a prescription, if necessary.



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BRACE/CRUTCHES/ELEVATION/ICE

For most meniscus surgeries you may put ALL of your weight on the leg after the operation. You will need crutches to help walk anywhere from 2 days to 1 week. The therapist can help determine when you are ready to come off the crutches, which is typically when your quadriceps strength has returned.

If you had a Meniscus Repair or Cartilage Procedure, you CANNOT put weight on your operative leg for 4-6 weeks, depending on the size of the repair.

Elevation of the leg above the heart is very important. This helps reduce swelling, bruising, and PAIN. Please elevate the leg 12 inches above your heart when sitting or lying down, especially the first 3-4 days after the surgery.

Ice is very important and should be applied 3-4 times per day for 20 minutes each session. Cryotherapy machines are available through the office and can be arranged prior to surgery, but may cost extra. NEVER put heat on the knee in the early post-operative period - this will increase swelling and pain.

INCISION/SHOWERING

You may shower 24 hours after the surgery. At this time, the incisions can get wet with soap and water. Do NOT scrub your wounds. Just dry well with a towel afterwards. You may cover the stitches with band-aids. You CANNOT submerge the incision in a bath, hot-tub, swimming pool, or other bodies of water for 4-6 weeks - this can lead to wound problems and an infection.

Your surgical dressing can be taken down by the therapist the day after surgery. There will be stitches over each incision - Leave these alone! You may put band-aids over them if they are irritating, but you DO NOT have to after the first 3 days. We will remove the sutures at your two-week clinic visit.

THERAPY

Physical Therapy typically starts within the first two days after surgery. Restoring motion and strength early helps with healing, decreases swelling and pain, and will help restore muscle balance - all to get you back to full activities sooner.



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DRIVING

You must have someone take you home after the surgery. For surgery on the left knee, you may resume driving when you are no longer taking the pain medications. Unfortunately for the right knee, typically you cannot drive for 2-3 weeks. Dr. Hinchey and your therapist will determine when your leg strength is adequate to drive safely.

FOLLOW UP and RECOVERY

Dr. Hinchey will see you after the surgery in the clinic at 2 weeks, 6 weeks, 3 months, and possibly longer if needed. Full recovery usually takes 6-8 weeks for a meniscectomy.

For cartilage procedures and meniscus repairs, full recovery takes 4-6 months. Dr. Hinchey typically will not allow running until 4 months. Even though the knee will be feeling better in just a few weeks, the healing process in the knee takes much longer after these operations.

CALL THE CLINIC (210) 705-5060 WITH:

- 1) Excessive drainage from the wound (after the first 48 hours)
- 2) Temperature greater than 101.5 degrees
- 3) Any chest pain, difficulty breathing or urinating, intractable constipation with severe abdominal pain, uncontrolled pain, or other concerns

after hours an answering service will answer your call and contact Dr. Hinchey if necessary