## Post-Operative Instructions for Lower Extremity Surgery

* Activity
  + Keep activities limited to only your “needs” and not your “wants” for 3 weeks
    - Needs- bathroom, kitchen, changing seats, daily needs. **NOT**- walking around mall, “exercise”, laundry, mowing grass- let someone else do it
  + Slowly increase weight bearing as tolerated using walker, crutches, or cane
  + Walking is a good exercise post-operatively, use good judgment and try not to exert yourself avoiding fatigue and severe pain
  + Stop before you regret it, but continue to work a little more each day
  + Remember – “be the tortoise not the hare” – “slow and steady wins the race”
  + Make effort to keep the extremity elevated when possible- for approx. 3 weeks
  + May gently use elliptical or exercise bike- 2 weeks after surgery
  + Avoid rapid movements, excessive bending, or straining of the affected extremity
  + Water walking is a great self-directed physical therapy. Find a pool after stitches are removed. Walk laps around the pool; slowly increase the number of laps
  + STOP IMMEDIATELY IF INCISION BEGINS TO COME APART
    - Or if you are concerned about the appearance of incision
* Wound Care
  + May take shower
    - Make sure to keep dressing dry
  + Once bulky dressing is off clean the incision with soap and water (only for stitches)
    - Hibiclens and Hex-A-Clens (can find at local pharmacy)- **Don’t use a washcloth**
* Pat the incision dry, do **not** rub (for sutures and glue)
* For incisions that have stitches apply betadine 2x a day
* If your incision was covered with skin glue, do **not** attempt to scrape it off for 2 weeks
* Apply an ice pack to help with swelling or discomfort for no longer than 45 min at a time, insert a thin layer of cloth between skin and ice
* Cooling devices are fine to use. Make sure to have a layer of cloth between skin and device
* If swelling occurs apply an ACE bandage, wrap from the toes up
* Your incision should look better every day. If it looks red, inflamed, or starts to hurt more and more- NOTIFY IMMEDIATELY
* Driving
  + As Passenger:
    - If possible keep extremity elevated – it may be easiest to sit in the back seat
    - If going on long trips allow for stops every 2 hrs to walk around car
  + As Driver:
    - Consult Dr. Williams about driving while on pain medications
    - Can drive (non-stick shift) after 1 week if procedure was performed on the left leg
    - If procedure was performed on the right leg, can drive when able to slam the brake pedal. Ask yourself if you can save a child if they jump out in front of your car. It’s not about how fast you can drive, rather how fast you can stop.
* Dress
  + Foot wear should not rub the incision
* Follow-Up Visits
  + 1 week post-op visit to remove dressing
  + 2 week post-op visit to remove visible stitches
  + If no visible stitches- follow up 4-6 weeks
* If you are not progressing appropriately and would like to try formal physical therapy, please contact us