



# NJ / PA KNEE & SHOULDER CENTERS: POST-OPERATIVE WEIGHT-BEARING / KNEE BRACE / SHOWERING INSTRUCTIONS

Patient: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## THE AMOUNT OF WEIGHT YOU MAY BEAR ON YOUR OPERATIVE LEG WHILE WALKING IS AS FOLLOWS:

- None (use 2 crutches at all times)
- Light touchdown of foot, flat to floor, for balance only (i.e., bear less than 10% of your body weight, using two crutches)
- You may bear up to \_\_\_\_ % of full body weight on your operative leg while ambulating (use one or two crutches as needed). Note: Using a bathroom scale may be helpful in determining the correct “feel” of the prescribed percentage of normal weight-bearing. When walking, touch foot flat to floor (i.e., do not walk on your toes).
- No limit. Bear as much weight as is comfortable. You may stop using crutches when you feel you no longer need them.
- No limit. Bear as much weight as you feel comfortable with, but only when your brace hinges are locked with your knee fully straight (see below). **Do not bear weight on your leg if the brace is unlocked** (i.e., freely bendable).

## GENERAL POST-OP KNEE BRACE INSTRUCTIONS:

- **DO NOT** get your brace wet!!!
- Unless you have been specifically instructed by us to do so, **never** remove or reposition your brace (or let anyone else do the same) without first speaking to your surgeon or our physician assistant (PA-C).
- Keep a snug elastic sock or stocking on your foot and elevate your leg to control foot swelling. Do not let the top of the sock or stocking roll down into a tight band that will dig into your skin above your ankle. If it reaches, try to pull the sock or stocking up and over the lower end of your knee brace for a few inches. Tape it in place if it keeps rolling back down.
- If one of the metal hinge side-bars of your brace digs into your skin at the groin or ankle, insert some clean cloth padding or foam rubber under that part of the brace rather than remove or adjust the brace yourself. If it remains uncomfortable, call us and arrange to come in and have it adjusted.

## REGARDING YOUR KNEE BRACE HINGES:

- Your brace has no hinge settings, limitations or adjustments that you need to be concerned about.
- Your brace hinges have been locked at \_\_\_\_\_ **degrees** of knee flexion (bending): No movement allowed in any direction.
- Your brace hinges can be locked only when the hinge side-bars are fully straight. When the hinges are unlocked, they are pre-set to allow knee bending up to \_\_\_\_ **degrees** of flexion. Do not attempt to change this knee bending limit setting without your surgeon's permission. You should always lock your hinges in the fully extended position (hinge side-bars lined up in a straight line) for weight-bearing while walking, if weight-bearing is allowed (see above).
- Your brace hinges have been set to allow \_\_\_\_ **to** \_\_\_\_ **degrees** of knee flexion (bending); the hinges will not allow a fully extended (straight-leg) position to be reached, so you cannot lock your hinges out at full knee extension, for walking or otherwise.

## REGARDING SHOWERS:

As long as you have a proper, protective “cast bag” to waterproof your leg, you may shower as early as the first post-op day! If you are not yet bearing full weight on your operative leg, follow this procedure: place a sturdy, stable, wettable chair or high stool in your shower (a special bathtub seat or sitting bar may also be used). Run shower water to desired temperature and shut off. With your cast-bag securely applied, carefully make your way into the shower and sit down. Use assistance, as needed, and observe any prescribed weight-bearing limitations! Run water and shower up! Make sure your brace and dressing do not get wet. You may remove the cast bag as soon as you have dried yourself off. Be careful exiting the shower!

If you are able and allowed (see above) to bear full weight on your operative leg, you may shower while standing as soon as you wish, as long as your cast-bag is on.

If you are not required to wear a knee brace at all times, you may begin to shower without your cast-bag when your skin incisions are perfectly dry, which is usually 5 to 6 days after surgery.

If you are required to use a knee brace at all times, then you must use a cast-bag for showers until your surgeon says that you may remove your brace for showers. When this time comes, sit down on your shower chair first and then remove your brace. Shower while seated and after drying, re-apply your brace before attempting to get up and exit the shower. Observe any prescribed weight-bearing limitations at all times!