



Southport and  
Ormskirk Hospital  
NHS Trust

# **PATIENT INFORMATION**

## **Knee Injury**

Accident & Emergency Department



Soft tissue knee injuries can happen for a variety of reasons. Symptoms can range from mild to severe therefore making it difficult initially to move your knee or take weight through your leg.

Some common symptoms that can be easily managed are:

- Pain – Use regular pain relief if needed to help manage your pain. The pharmacist can advise you on what would be best to take or the hospital/GP may prescribe you medications.
- Swelling – this is normally worse in first 2 – 3 weeks but can last longer.
- Bruising – can last 2 – 3 weeks and may spread down the leg or to the foot. This is because of the effect gravity has.
- Difficulty walking or moving the knee – by taking your pain relief regularly this may enable you to gently move your knee. It is important that unless you have been advised otherwise that you try and gently move your knee by bending and straightening. Elbow crutches are not routinely given out but if you have been given them use them as directed. If you have not been given elbow crutches try and walk around as normally as possible to prevent other joint and muscle stiffness and soreness.

It can often take at least 6 – 8 weeks for symptoms to fully settle after a significant knee injury. Returning to sport or high level activity or hobbies may take longer.

## **FIRST 48 HOURS**

### **Protect**

- If you have been provided with crutches use them as you have been instructed to.
- It is important to protect your knee in the early stages from further stresses as this will allow the healing process to start.

### **Rest**

- Resting the knee helps the soft tissues to heal and helps keep the swelling and discomfort to a minimum.
- You may need to modify your walking and activity dependant on the severity of your injury. It is important to gently exercise trying to get your knee as straight as possible. Try and walk getting your heel to the floor if you are able to so.

### **Ice**

- You can use a bag of crushed ice or peas (do not eat after using) wrapped in a damp towel and apply to the injured area. Use for up to 20 minutes and check your skin before and after to ensure there are no breaks to the skin or ice burns. If there are stop using the ice. You can apply the ice every 3 hours during the day.

### **Elevation**

- Raising the leg will help to improve the swelling in sitting. Try to raise your ankle higher than your heart frequently throughout the day.

## **AFTER 48 HOURS**

The knee should be less swollen and painful. Try to walk as normally as you can aiming to get your heel down when stepping.

Try to do the exercises to start moving your knee to prevent further stiffness and weakness.

## **EXERCISES**

- **Static Quads**

Sit with your leg out straight. Push the back of your knee into the bed tightening up your thigh muscle. Hold for 10 seconds and repeat 5 – 10 times and try and do 3 times a day.

- **Inner Range Quads**

Sitting on the bed, place a rolled pillow under your knee. Straighten your knee, lifting your heel off the bed. Hold for 10 seconds. Do 5 times 3 – 4 times a day.

- **Straight Leg Raising**

The leg is straightened, the foot is pulled up towards you as far as possible and the thigh muscle is straightened. Lift your heel up off the bed 3 – 4 inches and hold for 10 seconds in order to lift the leg straight off the bed. Try and do 5 times 3 – 4 a day.

- **Knee Bends**

Try and gently bend and straighten knee. Sit with your leg up and gently bend your knee and straighten again. Try

and do 5 – 10 times 3 times a day.

- **Normal movement**

Try to move your knee, walk and stand as normally as your symptoms allow

## **DRIVING**

- We advise that before you return to driving you are able to perform an emergency stop without hesitation and discomfort. You should inform your insurance company.

## **WORK**

- Returning to work will depend on your injury and what your occupation is. You can self-certify for the first 7 days. If you need a medical note for a longer period of time you will need to see your GP.

## **Less common symptoms that may require further assessment:**

- Giving way – if your knee is ‘giving way’ causing you to fall, nearly falling or feels ‘unstable’
- Locking – if you are unable to move your knee due to the feeling of it being ‘locked’
- Hot – if your knee is red and hot to touch or if you have a fever (high temperature)
- If you are unable to lift your leg up keeping your knee straight

**IF YOU HAVE ANY OF THE ABOVE SYMPTOMS ALERT  
THE CLINICIAN YOU ARE SEEING OR RE- ATTEND THE  
ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT**

If you are at all concerned, please contact:

**A&E Department  
Telephone: 01704 704659 (Nurses' Station)  
NHS 111**

*Please retain this leaflet for future reference*

**Please call 01704 704714 if you need  
this leaflet in an alternative format**

**Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust**

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**FOR APPOINTMENTS**

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We would welcome your feedback about your experience  
at Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust.  
Please access the Friends and Family Test at the following  
link:

[https://www.southportandormskirk.nhs.uk/patients-and-  
visitors/fft/](https://www.southportandormskirk.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/fft/)

**Thank you**

Author/Owner: Moira Burford  
Ref: 10/56  
Version: 5  
Reviewed: January 2023  
Next Review: January 2026