

## Arthroscopy of the Knee

### What is an arthroscopy?

An arthroscopy is a surgical technique for looking inside the joint with a small telescope (“keyhole surgery”). It allows a good view of the joint and small operations to be carried out. It is particularly useful in the diagnosis and treatment of cartilage and ligament problems of the knee.

### What is the aim of an arthroscopy?

The aim of an arthroscopy is to correct or assess the problems within your knee. The surgeon is able to confirm the nature of the injury and may be able to remove or repair the damage whilst causing minimal disruption to the knee joint. In some cases, surgery will not be able to reverse the damage which has already occurred. In the majority of cases the speed of your recovery will be dictated by the degree of damage and how well you can rehabilitate your knee.

### What is the initial treatment after the operation?

Your knee may be swollen for a couple of weeks or longer after your operation. It is important to **rest** with your leg elevated for the first two or three days and apply **ice packs** as necessary. The ice pack should always be wrapped in a damp tea towel or cloth and never placed directly onto the skin as this may cause an ice burn. It should be applied for a maximum of 20 minutes as any longer can make the swelling worse. The ice pack may be applied several times during the day, with at least an hour break between each application.

It is important to start bending your knee after the operation. Attached are some gentle **exercises** to do frequently after the operation. You should not push into pain but mild discomfort is acceptable. As is usual with any new exercise, your muscles may ache and you may experience new aches and pains for a few days, these should settle. If they do not, try to find which exercise causes pain and avoid doing it.

You will be able to walk on the day of your surgery however limit this to around the house, avoiding long walks or standing for long periods. When walking your knee may feel uncomfortable but it is important that you try to walk normally. You may need to use a stick or crutches for a few days (or longer, dependent on the type of surgery performed). The physiotherapist will advise you regarding this.

Your surgeon will advise you about returning to work, sports and driving.