

Sports Medicine Service Benefits, Alternatives and Risks of Surgery

Potential Benefits

While every person is different, and every person responds to surgery differently, the surgery you agreed to is intended to have the following benefits:

- Improve pre-operative symptom and/or limitation in function

Alternatives to Surgery

This surgery is elective. The alternatives to surgery include, but are not limited to the following:

- Pain management
- Use of anti-inflammatory medications
- Injection therapy
- Physical therapy
- Acupuncture
- Other non-surgical treatments

Surgical Risks

Infection: Infection can occur after any surgery despite the highest level of precaution. Superficial infections (on the skin) or deep infections (within the joint) may occur. A skin infection is generally treated with oral antibiotics. If you develop a deep infection, you may require the need for additional surgery and the need for prolonged oral and/or IV antibiotics.

Blood clot: Deep vein thrombosis (blood clot) is unusual but can occur in some patients after this type of surgery.

Ligament injury: In order to allow visualization under anesthesia, the ligaments may be released to allow better visualization and to prevent cartilage damage. If necessary, this generally heals uneventfully and does not require additional surgery or treatment.

Nerve injury: Injury to nerves can occur during surgery. Some skin nerves will be cut just by making an incision on the skin. Small patches of numbness around the incisions are generally tolerated well by most patients, but some develop pain in addition to numbness. Some nerves can get stretched or injured during the surgery. Most neuropraxias (nerve injuries) are temporary and resolve; although permanent injury to the nerve can occur. Because nerves involve sensation as well as muscle power, nerve injury can produce numbness in the treated limb as well as weakness or paralysis.

Pain: Pain is often improved from pre-operative pain levels. However, pain can persist and may continue for many months.

CRPS (chronic regional pain syndrome): In some instances, although rare, it is possible for patients to develop severe burning pain with changes in the skin without an obvious cause that would explain the pain. This is classified as a pain syndrome and is thought to be an abnormal response to the trauma of surgery. The incidence of CRPS is unpredictable and can result from any trauma, including surgery. Patients subsequently require pain management services by a pain management physician.

Opioid Management: While we do our best to control pain while minimizing exposure to opioid pain medications, your surgery may require their use. Even at low doses, these medicines have risk, including the risk of addiction.

Swelling: Prolonged swelling can persist for a period of time following surgery.

Stiffness: Stiffness can persist due to scarring from the injury or the surgery.

Hardware/graft failure: If your surgeon has used plate(s) and/or screw(s) or other implants, it is possible you may subsequently require surgical removal of same due to factors including pain, loosening and/or wearing-away of hardware.

Recurrence of pathology/Need for Re-operation: It is possible for the condition for which you underwent surgery to return again after surgery. There is always a chance of failure with any type of surgery being performed.