

## What is Physiotherapy?

The Knysna Life Healthcare Hospital protocol offers *physiotherapy* as part of the rehabilitation of various post-surgical conditions. These include total knee-and hip replacements, fractures of the lower and upper limbs, spinal surgery of the neck and lower back, rotator cuff repairs, and treatment and rehabilitation of abdominal surgery, post-natal care, mastectomies and other related conditions.

Physiotherapists are skilled professionals that use a variety of techniques to help your muscles and joints to work to their full potential. They play an important role in rehabilitation such as helping people who have suffered a stroke to relearn basic movements. Physiotherapists not only offer treatment, they can also help prevent injuries or help to avoid problems from recurring. For each area of concern, a physiotherapist can evaluate the problem, and design an individualized programme of care to improve your function and enable you to manage your symptoms more effectively.

## What does Physiotherapy treatment involve?

Your Physiotherapist can assess your condition, diagnose the problem, and help you understand your condition before commencing treatment. They will work with you to develop a treatment plan.

Physiotherapy may include:

- Joint mobilization to allow movement at the joints and to relieve pain
- Exercises to stretch tight muscles, strengthen weakened ones and improve posture
- Fitting of therapeutic belts and supports
- Airways clearance techniques, drainage of phlegm, breathing exercises and the restoration of functional breathing patterns to assist with a variety of breathing difficulties
- Cold packs and electrotherapy, to relieve pain, reduce swelling, speed up the healing and recovery process and improve movement
- Suggestions for appropriate body mechanics and energy saving tips for home and work

Each kind of surgery necessitates a different regime of treatment and rehabilitation according to indications, contra-indications and established protocols. Rehabilitation is always focused on prevention of other complications and therefore individual detailed exercise programmes are compiled for patients to prevent other complications from

developing.

### **Does my Medical Aid cover my physiotherapy treatment?**

Medical Aids offer different levels of benefits. Most Medical Aids require authorization prior to admission to hospital. If you are on a comprehensive medical plan, you are often covered for in-patient physiotherapy, and, in some instances, this may also include follow-up treatment as an out-patient. **However, it is of utmost importance to verify your situation directly with your Medical Aid PRIOR to admission. Please note that this is the responsibility of the Medical Aid member.** Some Medical Aids will provide comprehensive cover, including the use of crutches; kinesiotape etc, while others will only cover your treatment, but may exclude the use of therapeutic materials. **If you require more detailed information regarding your specific needs, a pre-admission consultation with your physiotherapist is advised.**

### **What is the protocol for a referral to physiotherapy?**

Generally patients require physiotherapy following surgical procedures to prevent complications and/or assist with recovery. **Physiotherapy is not included in hospital nursing care. It is provided by independent healthcare professionals.** If you require physiotherapy, the hospital has the following protocol:

- You have the right to use the physiotherapist of your choice for your care, provided this person is prepared to do hospital visits.
- If you do not have a particular preference, the physiotherapist on duty for the hospital on-call roster will be notified to provide your physiotherapy.
- It is in your own best interest to ensure that you are informed regarding your post-operative care. Should you have a preferred physiotherapist, you should notify this person prior to your admission in order to discuss your specific treatment requirements.

### **What happens if I don't have a Medical Aid?**

Generally, the physiotherapist will discuss payment options with you prior to commencing treatment, and is required by law to obtain your permission for treatment. In most cases the therapist will send you an account when you are discharged, based on standard medical aid tariffs (known as RPL- recommended pricing list).

### **What happens if I need more treatment after my discharge from hospital?**

Your physiotherapist should discuss your treatment needs with you as you progress through treatment. Should you require follow-up treatment, it will depend on your personal needs and circumstances. If you reside within the Knysna residential area, you have the option to visit the practice (adjacent to the hospital at the Knysna Medical Centre) on an outpatient basis. Home visits can also be arranged in exceptional cases. Out-of town residents will be provided with a report on their progress and can be referred to a therapist of their choice nearer to their homes. Please ensure that you take all therapeutic equipment (such as ice packs, crutches, etc.) with you when you are discharged, as you may be billed for these by the relevant service providers (i.e. the hospital or the orthotist).

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