

Patient Name: _____

INFORMED CONSENT: THE RISK OF COMPLICATION(S)

The surgical treatment of problems of the extremities, the spine and trunk, and of their bones, joints, muscles, nerves and other supporting or enclosing structures carries a certain degree of risk of adverse complications, of which you, as a patient (or as the parent or legal guardian of a patient), should be aware before you consent to your/his/her operation.

For your information the following is a description of the possible complications in any surgery performed on the musculoskeletal system which includes muscles, tendons, ligaments, bones, nerves, and other supporting structures of the extremities, spine, or trunk. These complications are rare but do exist even though all attempts will be taken to minimize the potential risks:

1. Disturbances or delays of wound healing and infection which may result in a joint without motion, repeated surgeries, and in the most bizarre of situations, e.g. a totally immune-suppressed individual (AIDS), might require an amputation or fusion of the joint, e.g. a permanently stiff knee.
2. Clots in the veins or thrombophlebitis, and blood clots traveling to the lungs causing chest pain and/or breathing difficulty, and rarely death.
3. Allergic reactions to and other troublesome side effects from drugs and/or transfusions.
4. Side reactions to medicines can develop in anyone and while usually less troublesome can often be more serious, occasionally permanent, and rarely fatal. All medicines are prescribed carefully and advisedly and only if the benefit expected to be derived from their use outweighs the associated risks.
5. Various afflictions of the kidney, urinary passages and bladder, leading to disturbed function or urination, and/or infection can also occur.
6. Various afflictions of the digestive system, including stomach and intestinal ulcers, internal bleeding, intestinal distention, obstruction and/or perforation, acute gall bladder and/or liver (hepatitis) infections and/or stones in various systems such as the gall bladder have also rarely been observed. When general anesthesia is used, patients can often have post-operative vomiting and constipation.
7. Nerve damage as a result of mobilization of the structures or cutting around or inside the nerve itself; nerves may be unavoidably compressed, stretched or damaged in the process and become paralyzed as a consequence; the paralysis is almost always temporary, but occasionally may be long lasting or, rarely permanent; paralysis may involve impairment or loss of muscular movement of the part of the body which is involved and/or impairment or loss of sensation.

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Numbness, tingling and pain may ensue. The recovery process may be prolonged depending on the extent of damage or length of the nerve involved.

8. Disturbances of heart beat or function or heart attack can occur rarely.
9. Pneumonia, collapse of part of the lung, and/or wet lung (pulmonary edema), also rarely occur and may be quite serious.
10. Temporary confusion, or more rarely a stroke, has been observed particularly in elderly patients. The confusion usually improves or clears completely after a time, but a stroke is likely to leave permanent effects.

The vast majority of these complications have had temporary consequences only and have not affected the ultimate outcome of the operation, but to a greater or lesser extent they have tended to complicate, prolong and/or lead to the need for additional treatment(s), required consultation from or treatment by other specialists, lengthened the time of hospitalization.

A minor complication may cause you nothing more than some additional suffering and inconvenience, but may increase your period of disability. On the other hand, a major complication may sometimes prove much more serious and even devastating, leading to great personal suffering for you, the need for intensive care and/or additional surgery and cause you a major prolongation of hospitalization, greatly increased expense and prolonged disability. Rarely a major complication may require abandonment of the original treatment plan or adversely affect the outcome, and cause permanent physical impairment.

The surgical and nursing staffs are well aware of these possible complications and make every reasonable effort to prevent their occurrence. They are also trained to monitor your condition carefully, recognize signs of trouble early, treat complications when they arise quickly and competently, and thus minimize their consequences to you.

If you have any questions regarding the risks or necessity of your operation, you should discuss them with me so that you will be satisfactorily informed before giving your consent to operation.

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I acknowledge that I have read this document in its entirety and that I have fully understood it prior to my signing. I understand that I am entitled to make any inquiries regarding any aspects of my/his/her diagnosis or treatment which I do not understand.

Nature of operation and/or procedure

Date: _____

(Signature of patient)

Date: _____

(Signature of parent or legal guardian*)

(Relationship to patient)

*Note: If the patient is under eighteen (18) years, the permission of the patient's parent or legal guardian