



Worker's Compensation Program

The providers at Rockhill Orthopaedics are committed to assisting patients who have been injured during the course of their employment in a fair and timely manner. Our commitment aims to provide the patient with the best possible outcomes using the most appropriate treatment path, whether surgical or non-surgical.

Teamwork

The core principle of this treatment plan is to work as a team throughout the recovery process. Your team will include a variety of members all of whom are committed to your success. Your recovery team will often consist of:

1. You, the Patient.

You are the most important member of this team. All of the other members are present to ensure your success.

2. Your Physician.

We are here to give you the best medical care possible. Our goal is to ensure a safe return to full duty and the highest level of function possible.

3. Your Case Manager.

Case managers are often, but not always, assigned to patients to facilitate the treatment plan. Case managers are often nurses with experience in the medical field. These team members work directly with you in the recovery process and may even be present at the office visits to help you understand the treatment plan, obtain the appropriate approval for further care, if required, and to help identify your current work readiness.

4. The Insurance Adjuster.

The insurance adjuster is a representative of the insurance company that approves the appropriate medical treatment. Your case manager will communicate with the insurance adjuster after each appointment regarding your progress and further treatment that may be required.

5. Your Physical/Occupational Therapist.

Many injuries require the services of a physical or occupational therapist. A physical therapist specializes in treating a variety of musculoskeletal injuries. An occupational therapist focuses on improving a patient's level of function following an injury and often has specialized training in upper extremity injuries. Therapists actively treat patients based on instructions given by your physician and they provide your treatment team feedback in the form of written reports that become part of your medical record.



Worker's Compensation Program

6. Your Employer.

Your employer has an interest in optimizing your recovery and will be kept informed of your progress with treatment and your ability to perform work duties throughout the recovery process. It is your employer that determines whether or not they can accommodate the work restrictions given during your recovery.

Commitment

Our goal is your recovery and we are committed to you and maximizing your treatment outcomes. Although there are many other members of the team, you are our priority.

It is important to also understand that we expect a commitment from our patients in return. This commitment can be seen in your actions; common examples are listed below:

1. Attend all of your medical visits.

We will work to make your visits as efficient as possible, however, a pattern of cancelled visits is concerning because it can indicate a lack of commitment. We understand that the unexpected can happen and rescheduling appointments may be necessary. Please communicate this to your treatment team, most importantly, your case manager.

2. Attend your therapy visits.

Physical therapy is the cornerstone of your recovery. The therapists will record both your attendance as well as your effort at therapy as part of your overall medical record. They will also record your response to therapy and in some instances, may recommend further treatments or alternative treatment options.

3. Comply with the treatment plan.

Once a treatment plan is formulated, make an effort to follow that plan as closely as possible. All treatment plans are individual and we understand that people will progress at different rates, but it is our expectation that you will follow the treatment plan developed for you.

4. Responsibly use of narcotics.

In the course of some treatment plans, we may decide to place you on narcotic medication. This refers to a class of medications that are based on morphine. These medications are used in the treatment plan for acute pain relief, however, over the long term, all narcotics will have side effects of dependence, constipation, and irritability to name a few. To combat these side effects, our aim is to place you on the lowest dose possible as well as responsibly wean you off of these medications. There are instances when we may utilize a urine screen to determine the amount of narcotics that you are using to help us manage how to utilize these medications in your care. These medications can't be taken while on the job or while driving.



Worker's Compensation Program

5. Take care of yourself.

Injuries can be stressful. Not only do we want to treat your injury, but we want to make sure that your overall health does not deteriorate in the process. Eat well, quit smoking if this applies and tell your provider if you are starting to feel anxious or depressed, which can be a natural response to certain circumstances. Attempt to keep yourself on a daily routine; stay as active as possible and establish good resting and sleeping patterns.

The Evaluation

Every injury needs to start with an accurate diagnosis. This starts with an accurate account of the event itself as well as a comprehensive medical history. Your provider will also perform a physical exam. Further testing may include:

- 1. X-rays.** In this test, multiple standard views of anatomic areas are performed to examine the bony structures. This test may be repeated during the course of your treatment.
- 2. CT scan.** This test is a series of X-rays put together and enhanced by a computer. This test gives us the greatest detail for bony injuries.
- 3. MRI.** This test does not utilize radiation. This scan provides a great deal of information about the soft tissues (muscles, ligaments, tendons) in the area of concern.
- 4. An ultrasound.** This test can be used to evaluate for blood clots in veins as well as examine areas for foreign bodies, among many other uses.
- 5. An EMG/NCV.** These tests are utilized when there is suspicion for nerve involvement in an injury.

The Treatment

Once a diagnosis has been made, the treatment phase begins. Treatment for many injuries begins with a combination of immobilization, therapy, and on occasion, surgical intervention.

During the course of treatment, you will attend regular office visits. During these visits, we will review the treatment plan as well as your response to it.

As part of these visits, we will address your work status. Your work status is defined by what we feel you are able to safely perform given your current injury status. We will give you very specific work restrictions that your employer will review and determine whether or not they can accommodate. If your employer can accommodate these restrictions, you will return to work with these



Worker's Compensation Program

restrictions enforced. If they are unable to accommodate the restrictions, you will not be allowed to return to work. If you are not allowed to return to work due to the restrictions, our hope is that you use that time to facilitate your recovery by engaging in therapy (either at home or at a therapy clinic). In some instances, we may try to let you return to full duty for limited times during the day or week, increasing your physical requirements over time.

Physical Therapy

A large part of recovery often involves physical or occupational therapy. There are several different categories of therapy that you may participate in.

1. General therapy.

In general therapy, the goal is on recovery of the injured limb, focusing on swelling, range of motion, and strength. These visits can range between 1 to 3 times per week. In many instances, you are able to perform some activities at home that the therapist can demonstrate at your visits. Your therapist will provide you with a home exercise program (HEP) that is designed to continue your treatment on days when you don't formally attend therapy. This program is critical to your success: Do the activities in the HEP, they will help your recovery.

2. Work Hardening/Work Conditioning.

When we feel that you are nearing a return to work, the focus will shift from general therapy to work hardening or work conditioning (these terms are often used interchangeably). In this version of therapy, the goal is to have you start training for your job, much like you would train for a marathon. These sessions are often longer than the general therapy visits and will focus on activities that you will be expected to perform at work. Work conditioning should be seen as an extension of the general therapy process, just with more time at therapy at each session, intensity and focus of the safe performance of work activities.

3. Functional Capacity Evaluation.

In this one-time visit, our goal is to determine what level of work you are fit for. This test often occurs when we feel that our progress has stopped or plateaued. This test is also designed to measure your effort that is exerted while performing the tasks. It is very important to perform this test with maximal effort to obtain a valid result. When the results of the test are not considered valid, physicians are not able to define your limitations, which often leads to a recommendation of no limitations on activity.



Worker's Compensation Program

Completion of Treatment.

When you have completed treatment for your injury, you are released from medical care. This does not mean that you may not need additional treatment in the future. Specifically, it means that for the foreseeable future, there is no active supervised medical care approved or required.

When you have reached this point, you are deemed to be at your Maximal Medical Improvement, or MMI. When you have reached your MMI, the insurance carrier will request a disability or impairment rating. An impairment rating is based on a number of items that include physical exam findings, as well as items specific to the type of injury that you sustained. This rating is based on a formula and not on our opinions as medical providers. A disability rating is more flexible in terms of allowing a medical provider's opinions to be considered. As part of this narrative, we often include any permanent restrictions that now apply to you. These restrictions will apply to any further employment or positions that you seek in the future.

HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) Privacy Rules

When treated under the workers' compensation system, HIPAA privacy regulations do not apply. Your medical records in regards to your treated injury are accessible by the insurance representatives in order to facilitate your care.

Useful Information

Please feel free to contact us during any point of your treatment. Our general office contact information is:

Rockhill Orthopaedic Specialists
120 NE St Luke's Blvd, Suite 200
Lee's Summit, Mo 64086

Phone number: 816-246-4302
Fax Number: 816-246-9493

At Rockhill, we have a team that is dedicated to our worker's compensation patients. When calling, please ask to be directed to one of these team members who will be happy to assist you.