

## Compartment Syndrome: Nurses Reported The Signs But Did Not Advocate For The Patient.

During the patient's total right knee replacement surgery the orthopedist reportedly noticed the popliteal vein had been damaged and called in a vascular surgeon to repair it.

The next day it was decided the patient would be ready to be transferred from the hospital to a rehab facility in two days time.

The patient later testified that starting right after her surgery her right foot was pale, her lower leg was pale and she had difficulty moving her right ankle and the toes on her right foot.

On admission to the rehab facility three days after surgery the nursing staff picked up right away on signs of compromised circulation in the foot, including edema in the foot and ankle.

The nursing staff reported the problem to the vascular surgeon and to the physical medicine/rehabilitation specialist who was managing her care in the rehab facility.

Two days after admission the vascular surgeon came in to see the patient and decided a fasciotomy had to be done as compartment syndrome had set in. The fasciotomy was done the next day. The procedure was not successful to stave off ischemia and several days later the patient had to have the leg amputated below the knee.

The patient's lawsuit in the Circuit Court, Cook County, Illinois resulted in a \$3,150,000 settlement from the physicians and the rehab facility.

The rehab facility was faulted because the nurses merely reported the signs and symptoms but did not actually advocate for timely medical intervention by the treating vascular surgeon or by another physician. **Toomire v. Cacioppo, 2008 WL 4923819 (Cir. Ct. Cook Co., Illinois, April 4, 2008).**