

Post-Operative Instructions: ACL Reconstruction

You are recovering from arthroscopic knee surgery with ACL reconstruction.

The following information is to help make your recovery as smooth and rapid as possible.

- 1) Keep your knee elevated as much as possible. Elevate your operative leg for the first 2-3 days so your knee is higher than your heart whenever you are resting. You may get up to use the bathroom and to eat meals, but the more you elevate your leg, the less you will swell, bleed, or have pain. Use your cold therapy unit as directed until you are seen in the office.
- 2) Keep your dressing on for 5 days post op. Do not get it wet. After the dressing is removed you may shower but no soaking of the extremity.
- 3) Post-operative bleeding is not unusual. Reinforcing your dressing is all right. If you have concerns about the amount of bleeding, please call.
- 4) You may place up to 100% of your weight on your leg WITH CRUTCHES AND YOUR KNEE IMMOBILIZER. Remember that surgery will cause your thigh muscles to be weak, so take your time and be safe.
- 5) If you're in a brace keep your knee immobilizer on at all times for both walking and sleeping. After we see you back in the office, we will discuss use for rest but keep it on for ambulation. You can remove it when at rest and awake and bend as below. If you do not have a brace on post op disregard.
- 6) Your post-operative therapy begins on the day of surgery. You can move your knee 0 - 90 degrees carefully. Work on range of motion of your knee several times each day. It is important to get as much bend as possible, as quickly as possible. In addition, work on keeping your knee FULLY STRAIGHT.

- 7) Initially you should perform ankle pumps (up and down motion), straight leg raises in the brace, thigh isometric contractions, and knee range of motion exercises. There is no limit to the amount of these exercises you may do. No therapy should cause sharp pain. Stop all activities that cause this kind of pain.
- 8) Post-operative pain is common, but should be controlled by the prescriptions given to you. Do not mix alcohol and prescription pain medications. Your need for prescription pain medication should decrease after 3-4 days, and you should begin taking your usual over-the-counter pain killer (Advil®, Tylenol®, aspirin), as needed. Be sure to take your antibiotics or other medications as prescribed.
- 9) If you have an ice machine use this for 30 minutes at a time. Place a thin towel or pillow case between the cooling pad and your skin. You can fill the machine with ice or freeze a few water bottles and rotate them out once the ice melts. Make sure that the pad tubing is connected securely. If it is not hooked up tight it will leak water. If you do not have an ice machine frozen peas or a bag of ice works well too. Do not put the ice directly on your skin.
- 10) If you have any unusual problems; increased pain after the first 3-4 days, a temperature over 101.5°F, unusual rashes, circulation or sensation problems, or any other problem, please call our office at (607) 734-4110.
- 11) Do not drive until you feel completely safe and able to handle the vehicle. You should not drive while taking prescription pain medications.
- 12) You will be seen in the office 5-7 days after surgery for follow-up. If you have any questions or concerns, please call us at (607) 734-4110.