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## **ACL RECONSTRUCTION POSTOP INSTRUCTIONS**

### **DAY OF SURGERY:**

1. Your knee will be wrapped with a cold therapy device. For the first 24 hours following surgery, keep the cuff on as much as possible except when you go to bed. This will help reduce the swelling and minimize the pain.
2. Your brace will be applied in the operating room. You must wear the brace, locked, for 7-10 days when walking. You must wear the brace locked while sleeping and showering for the first week as well. Use crutches when walking. You may bear weight as tolerated.
3. Contact your Physical therapist to confirm your appointment. Physical therapy should start a few days after surgery.
4. Keep your leg elevated to decrease swelling, which will then in turn decrease your pain. When in bed, your leg should be straight with a pillow under the calf, NOT under the knee.
5. ACL Reconstruction surgery is painful. Take your pain medications as needed. Avoid taking pain medications on an empty stomach, as it will make you nauseous.

### **DAY 1 AND UNTIL FIRST POST-OP VISIT:**

1. The cold therapy device will aid in decreasing pain and swelling. Apply the cold wrap for 20-30 minutes at least 4 times per day for the first few days. You may have to change the water/ice.
2. Remove the bandages 48 hours after surgery and apply gauze/bandaids to the wounds. Do not remove the white steri-strip tape over the lower incision. Re-apply clean Band-Aids daily over the top incisions, and a gauze pad over the lower incision daily. Do not put anything including bacitracin or ointments on or near the incisions. Use the ace wrap for 3 days after surgery if you have a considerable amount of swelling.

3. You may shower 48 hours after surgery. You will have to wear your brace while showering. To keep the brace dry, you should place your leg in a garbage bag with a hole in the bottom for your foot. Secure it with tape around your ankle and thigh.
4. Use the crutches for standing and walking.
5. Begin physical therapy 2-3 days after your surgery.
6. Do not drink alcoholic beverages or take illicit drugs when taking pain medications.
7. You may return to sedentary work/school in the next couple of days when you feel up to it. You will need to keep your leg elevated as much as possible.
8. Call the office tomorrow with any questions, and make an appointment to have your sutures removed next week.

### **MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION**

1. There may be some bleeding and fluid leaking from the incision site. This is normal after this type of surgery. This may continue for 24-36 hours. You may change and/or reinforce the bandages as needed. **Do Not** remove the white steri strip tapes covering the lower incision even if they are wet or bloody.
2. There will be MORE swelling on days 1-3 than there is on the day of surgery. This also is normal. The swelling will decrease with cold therapy/ice and by keeping it elevated. The swelling will make it more difficult to bend your knee. As the swelling goes down your motion will become easier.
3. You may develop swelling and bruising that extends from your knee down to your calf and perhaps even to your foot over the next week. Do not be alarmed. This too is normal, and it is due to gravity.
4. There may be some numbness adjacent to the incision site. This may last for 6-12 months.
5. It is also normal to develop a low-grade fever after surgery (up to 100.5°). This can last 2 days after surgery. If you have any concerns just let us know.