

ACL Post-Operative Instructions

While recovering from your ACL reconstruction, please observe the following guidelines.

1. **Rest:** Rest for the remainder of today and gradually resume activities as tolerated tomorrow. When you are not moving about, try to lie flat, with your leg **elevated** (with pillows) above the level of your heart to help reduce the swelling.
2. **Ice:** Continue to use the ice machine for the next few days. You may take breaks, but using ice at night may help your pain.
3. **Eating:** When you feel like eating, begin with clear fluids. If you tolerate this, you may resume your regular diet.
4. **Dressing:** The dressing on your knee was applied in a sterile environment. Try to keep this dressing dry and intact for 48 hours, if possible. If you are given a white stocking, continue to wear it for seven days. The first night and day after the surgery you can expect the white elastic stocking and bandages to get bloody. This is normal! We want the blood to drain out of the knee on to the dressings rather than build-up in your knee and cause swelling and pain.
5. **Dressing change:** Keep the wound clean and dry for seven days. Don't scrub the surgical area, pat the area dry with a towel and apply a new dry dressing. (Band aids over the incisions/ACE bandage over the knee). The steri-strips (tapes) do not need to be removed.
6. **Medication:** Some post-op pain should be expected. You were given a prescription for pain medication after surgery. This medication may cause nausea and/or constipation and is best taken after you have eaten. A stool softener, such as **colace**, is strongly recommended while taking your pain medicine. You may use an over the counter **laxative** if necessary.
7. **Weight-bearing on operative leg: Use crutches, you can wean off the crutches as tolerated.** You will have crutches after surgery, and will be instructed on how to use them. For the first week, you will use crutches for walking. After the first week, you can stop using the crutches as tolerated.
8. **CPM:** You may be given a CPM machine and will be instructed in its use.
9. **Brace:** You will receive a brace for your knee. When walking, you will keep the brace on until your office visit. When not walking, you will be able to take the brace off for exercises. In addition, sleep with the brace on until your office visit.
10. **Follow-up:** You should have a scheduled post-operative visit. This is usually scheduled for seven to ten days following surgery.
11. **Do not hesitate to call if you are experiencing any of the following:** Fever, chills, numbness or tingling, worsening pain, in spite of taking the prescribed medication, difficulty urinating or anything else that seems out of the ordinary. ***If it is after office hours, please contact the answering service at (203) 869-1145.*** Inform the doctor that you have recently had surgery and explain your situation.
12. **Physical Therapy:** Your doctor will instruct you when to start physical therapy. If you do not have a physical therapy prescription, we will give one to you at your first post-operative visit.

Patient: _____

Date: _____

Physician: _____