



## POST OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

### **Anterior Cruciate Ligament Reconstruction**

#### **Medication**

- **Pain Medication:** You will be given a prescription of pain medication at your pre-operative appointment. You should have this prescription filled in time for surgery, but do NOT take this medication prior to your surgery. You may take an over the counter anti-inflammatory medication (Ibuprofen or Advil, up to 600mg up to 3 times daily) after surgery in addition to your pain medication, unless you have a history of stomach ulcers. If you are not taking pain medication, you can still take an anti-inflammatory medication for inflammation, pain and swelling. Do not drive while taking Narcotic pain medication.
- **Antibiotic:** You may also be given a prescription for an antibiotic. This is to be taken after surgery every 6 hours until gone unless otherwise instructed.
- **Aspirin:** You should take 1 regular strength Aspirin (325mg) daily for 1 month postoperatively in place of 1 dose of anti-inflammatory medication to decrease your risk of blood clots. If you are currently on any blood thinning medications (Coumadin, Warfarin, etc.) or have a medical condition where you cannot take this medication, you will need to discuss this prior to surgery.

- **Nerve Block:** If you received a femoral nerve block, numbness and loss of function may persist for up to 24 hours postoperatively.

#### **Bathing**

- You may sponge bathe 48 hours after your surgery. You may NOT get your incision sites wet until 48 hours after your stitches or staples are removed.

#### **Dressing**

- It is normal for there to be drainage and for the dressing/ACE wrap to become blood tinged. If this occurs, reinforce with additional dressing. Keep your dressing in place. It will be changed at your first postoperative appointment.

#### **Diet**

- Following surgery, nausea is very common. Begin with clear liquids and progress to your daily diet as tolerated.

#### **Icing**

- Ice your knee for 20 minutes three to four times daily as needed for pain and swelling if you are using regular ice or a chemical ice pack.
- If you were supplied with an ice cooler at your pre-operative appointment, you can use this as much as tolerated for the first 72 hours after surgery. After 3 days, you may use the cooler for 20 minutes three to four times daily as needed for pain and swelling. Do not apply the pad of the ice cooler directly to your skin.

## Brace

- If you have been fit with a brace at your pre-operative appointment, bring this with you to surgery. You should wear the brace at all times unless instructed otherwise. You may loosen the straps as needed for comfort.

## Activity

- Crutches may be used to assist with walking and you may put as much weight on the operative leg as is comfortable unless otherwise directed by your physician. Elevate the operative leg with pillows under the foot and ankle to aid in reduction of swelling. No driving until instructed by your physician.

## Physical Therapy

- You may begin Physical Therapy 7-10 days after your surgery. You will receive a prescription for your therapy at your first post-operative appointment. Physical therapy is typically 2-3 times per week, but may vary depending on your specific surgery.
- You may begin exercises 24 hours after surgery to include ankle pumps and quad sets.

## Continuous Passive Motion Machine

- If you require a CPM unit, one will be delivered to your home for use 4-6 weeks post-operatively. You should begin using the CPM machine the day after surgery for 4-6 hours daily with as much range of motion as tolerated. You should increase your range of motion 5-10 degrees daily.

## Post Operative Appointment

- Your post operative appointment will be 3-4 days after your surgery for ACL reconstruction. Please schedule this appointment at your pre-operative appointment.

## Emergencies

- **If at any time you have questions or emergent concerns, contact Dr. Whitehurst or his physician assistant, Brent Card, PA-C at (815-398-9491).**
- If you are calling after hours or over a weekend you will be directed to the physician answering service and you may be called by the physician or physician assistant on call.
- Please call if any of the following arise:
- Fever over 101 (it is normal to have a low grade fever for the first 1-2 days after surgery)
  - Redness
  - Painful swelling
  - Numbness
  - Shortness of breath

**If you have any questions, please call Ashley at 815-484-6958.**

**After hours, please call 815-398-9491.**