



POST OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

Anterior Cruciate Ligament Reconstruction

Diet

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

Wound Management

- A bandage is applied to the operative site. Keep this on for 3 days after the surgery.
- 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.
- Remove the dressing after the 3rd post-operative day. It is still normal for there to be some drainage. Apply steri-strips or band-aids to the incision sites.
- No showers until after the dressing is removed. No baths or hot tubs!
- Sometimes small incisions are made that do not require suture closure. Please do not be alarmed by this.

Activity

- Keep the operative knee in the brace provided at all times, with the exception of showering.
- The brace applied to the leg is used to keep the leg straight after the surgery.
- The brace may be removed by the therapist to begin range of motion exercises.
- You are encouraged to walk in a controlled environment in order to avoid prolonged sitting.

- 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 the reduction of swelling.
- No driving until instructed by your physician.
- Sleeping may be performed in a reclining chair or bed with the use of pillows to support the operative site as tolerated.
- Generally, if you have a desk job you may return to work on the third post operative day.
- Return to a physically demanding job will be discussed on your postoperative visit.

Exercise

- You may begin exercises 24 hours after the surgery to include ankle pumps and quad sets.
- Formal physical therapy will begin prior to your return visit and it is safe to perform these exercises at home to assist with a return of strength and motion.

Ice/Cryotherapy

- An ice machine or ice packs will be provided and applied at the conclusion of your surgery.
- Use continuously for the first 72 hours postoperatively, then in 30 minute increments 4-5 times per day thereafter as tolerated.

OVER

Medications

- Most patients require the use of narcotics for a period of time after surgery. Take as directed.
- If you received a femoral nerve block, numbness and loss of function may persist for up to 24 hours postoperatively. You are encouraged to take your prescribed pain medication as indicated on the bottle regardless of pain for the first 24 hours.
- Common side effects of pain medication: nausea, insomnia, itching, constipation, drowsiness, hallucinations.
- Take medications with food to reduce side effects
- Do not operate machinery or moving vehicles while taking the pain medication.
- Ibuprofen, Motrin, Advil or Aleve may be taken as directed in addition to the pain medication to control symptoms

Emergencies

- **If at any time you have questions or emergent concerns contact Dr. Van Thiel or his physician assistant Carly Jackson, 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 >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

- Excessive bleeding and/or drainage from incision sites
- If you require immediate attention, go to the nearest emergency room

Follow-up

- A follow-up appointment will be set for 7-10 days after the surgery. If you have questions or concerns about this date contact our scheduler at (815-381-7365) during normal office hours.
- Physical Therapy will begin prior to your first postoperative visit

If you have additional questions or concerns most questions can be addressed by our Nursing staff (Jamie) by calling (815-381-7365).

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