

# SURGERY INSTRUCTIONS

**Geoffrey S. Van Thiel, MD/MBA**  
www.VanThielMD.com  
gvanthiel@rockfordortho.com



ROCKFORD  
ORTHOPEDIC



CRYSTAL LAKE  
ORTHOPEDICS

A DIVISION OF ROCKFORD ORTHOPEDIC ASSOCIATES, LTD.

## Anterior Cruciate Ligament Reconstruction

### What to Expect

- The following instructions will help guide you through your recovery. Separate instructions for therapy and exercises will be given and are available at [www.VanThielMD.com](http://www.VanThielMD.com).
- Dr. Van Thiel's PA (Physician Assistant) Carly Jackson will be closely involved in your care and recovery. A physician assistant is a licensed practitioner that has completed over 2 years of post-college medical training and has the credentials and expertise to treat patients independently.
- **1<sup>st</sup> Post-Operative Visit** – This will be between 10-14 days after the surgery. You will see Dr. Van Thiel and he will go through your pictures from surgery and answer any questions you have.
- **2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Post-Operative Visits** – Occur at 6 weeks and 3 months after surgery. During these visits you will be seen by Carly Jackson (Dr. Van Thiel's PA) to ensure that you are comfortable and meeting the recovery goals. Ms. Jackson is always in direct communication with Dr. Van Thiel and does have the medical expertise, training and credentials to help you along with your recovery.
- **4<sup>th</sup> Post-Operative Visit** – Occurs at 6 months after surgery. Dr. Van Thiel will discuss any questions that you have and ensure you are making a complete recovery.
- **Physical Therapy** – Physical therapy can start 3-5 days after surgery. We will assist with setting up a physical therapy upon scheduling your surgery.
- We will contact your insurance company to authorize your surgery, but we suggest that you

also contact your insurance company for further information and to verify coverage.

### Day of Surgery

- **Diet** – Do not eat anything after midnight the day of surgery.
- When you get to the hospital or surgery center Dr. Van Thiel will come speak with you and confirm the procedure and the side. Feel free to ask any questions.
- The anesthesiologist will also come speak with you. We routinely perform regional blocks for pain control during and after surgery. A regional block is a small injection that will numb the nerves at the operative site for up to 12-30 hours after surgery. These blocks are excellent for pain control.
- **After Surgery** – You will wake up in the recovery room and once you are comfortable and fully awake, the nurses will discharge you to go home.

### *Post-Operative Care*

#### 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.
- 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.
- Do not remove the dressing until the fifth post-operative day. Once removed, cover incisions

with bandaids and change daily. If showering, cover leg with plastic bag/tape and keep dry until day 5 after surgery. If the dressing becomes saturated, it is ok to remove the ace-wrap and apply a new ace-wrap.

- Keep incisions dry for 5 days after surgery. You may then shower normal after 5 days (running water only). No soaking in bath or hot tubs!
- Sometimes small incisions are made that do not require suture closure. Do not be alarmed.

### **Activity**

- Keep the operative knee in the brace provided at all times, with the exception of showering or when performing therapy exercises. The brace applied to the leg is used to keep the leg straight.
- The brace may be removed by the therapist to begin range of motion exercises.
- You are encouraged to walk in a controlled environment and avoid prolonged sitting. Crutches may be used to assist with walking and you may put as much weight on the operative leg as you like unless 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.
- 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.

### **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. You are encouraged to take your prescribed pain medication as indicated on the bottle regardless of pain for the first 24 hours.
- Side effects of pain medication: nausea, insomnia, itching, constipation, drowsiness, hallucinations.
- Take medications with food.
- 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. If you were prescribed Toradol (Ketorolac), do not take over-the-counter anti-inflammatories until this is gone.

### **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 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).