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Orthopaedic Surgery and Sports Medicine

PATIENT STICKER

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**POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS – ACL RECONSTRUCTION**

**DAY OF SURGERY:**

1. Ice will be placed on your knee in the recovery room. For the first 24 hours following surgery, keep ice 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 3-4 weeks when walking. You must wear the brace locked while sleeping and showering for the first 4 weeks, as well. You may unlock it for short periods when you are sitting or doing exercises.

3. There are exercises included that you can begin on the first or second postoperative day. The brace has been set to allow the correct amount of motion. Release the red tabs located on each side of the brace to unlock. Exercises should be done in brace, unless under the supervision of a physical therapist. Relock the brace in full extension at completion of exercises.

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.

1. Prescriptions for pain medications (Norco and Naproxen) will be sent to your pharmacy. You should avoid taking pain medications on an empty stomach, as it will make you nauseous. Otherwise, use the pain medication as needed.

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

1. Ice will aid in decreasing pain and swelling. Apply the ice for 30-40 minutes at least 4 times per day for the first few days. Then use it 2-3 times a day. You may use ice more frequently if you are having continued pain and swelling.

2. Remove the bulky bandage 48 hours after surgery and apply bandaids to the wounds if sealed dressings are saturated. Do not remove the white steri-strip tape over the incisions. Re-apply clean Band-Aids daily over the incisions daily if needed. Do not put anything including bacitracin or ointments on or near the incisions. Use the ace wrap for at least 7 days after surgery if you have a considerable amount of swelling.

3. You may shower 48 hours after surgery but **Do Not** get the incisions wet. Wrap your knee with plastic wrap and secure it with tape around your thigh. Then, place the brace on and cover it using a cast bag or a garbage bag with a hole in the bottom for your foot. Secure it with tape around your ankle and thigh. If your sutures do get wet, pat them dry and re-apply fresh Band-Aids.

1. Use the crutches while standing and walking so that you are putting no weight on your operated leg for the first two weeks.

5. Continue doing the exercises 2x day. Begin physical therapy 2-3 days after your surgery.

1. Do not drink alcoholic beverages or take illicit drugs when taking pain medications.
2. 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 in 10-14 days.

## 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 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.

1. There may be some numbness adjacent to the incision site. This may last for 6-12 months.
2. 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, please call the clinic.