



CONNECTICUT
CENTER FOR
ORTHOPEDIC
SURGERY, LLC

James T. Mazzara, MD

Orthopedic Surgeon

www.OrthoOnTheWeb.com

Patient Name _____

Date _____

ACL RECONSTRUCTION POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

Activity: After your anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) reconstruction, you should be given crutches.

These should be used for 4 weeks and you may put your foot on the ground for balance but you should not put full weight on the operative leg. Elevation of the leg is important for the first day after the surgery as it helps to reduce the leg swelling. After 1-2 days, if your knee is feeling good, you may increase your activity level gradually. The attached exercises can be started at 48 hours after surgery.

A knee immobilizer is also required for 4 weeks after surgery. It may be opened and removed for ice application and for therapy and exercises. Use ice packs to the knee for the first 24-48 hours after surgery. Apply the ice as frequently as needed after surgery. After 24 hours, you may use the ice packs two or more times a day for 20 minutes at a time, if desired for comfort.

Dressings: The post op dressing should remain in place for **48 hours** after the surgery. Then you can remove the dressing and shower. Clean the incisions with rubbing alcohol and cover the small incisions with Band-Aids after the shower. It is OK to get the arthroscopy incisions wet in a shower after 24 hours but do not soak them in bath water for one week. Re-wrap the leg with the ace bandage after the skin is dry.

Medications: You may resume your normal medications that you took prior to surgery. If you are able to tolerate aspirin, take one tablet (325 mg) daily until you have resumed normal activity or are seen in the office. Your prescription for pain medication should be filled after you leave the Ambulatory Surgery Center. Medication refills will only be done by me or my office during the week from 8am - 4pm. Narcotic pain medications will not be refilled after 4 pm or on the weekends. **Plan ahead.**

Medications for postoperative pain are as follows: _____ 1-2 pills every 4 hours if you have pain.

If you are **not** taking the above narcotic medications, you may take Extra-Strength Tylenol as directed on the label. You may take over-the-counter anti-inflammatory medications such as Advil or Aleve if you know you can tolerate those medications and are not taking blood thinners. Once the nerve block begins to wear off, start your pain medicine.

Follow up: Make an appointment to be seen approximately _____ days after surgery. I will discuss the procedure and the findings during surgery at this visit.

Problems: Complications from knee surgery can occur and you must be aware of the early warning symptoms of some of the more serious problems that may arise. The risk of surgery is never "zero". Call the office for a temperature over 101 degrees, pain not controlled by the pain medication, or drainage from the incision.

Phlebitis: This is a blood clot in the leg. These symptoms include calf pain (i.e.: cramps or a "Charlie horse") in the leg. Other symptoms include chest pain and shortness of breath. Phlebitis is a serious complication if it is undiagnosed or untreated, therefore you should call the office immediately if you have any of these complaints.

CALL THE OFFICE OR EMERGENCY ROOM IF ANY OF THE ABOVE PROBLEMS OCCUR.

If you have any questions or problems, please call the office. The office is open Monday through Friday from 9:00am to 5:00pm and can be reached at 860-649-2267. After hours, you may call the office to speak with the covering doctor.

Regular exercise to restore your knee mobility and strength is necessary. Therapy is an essential part of a good result but some simple exercises can be started when pain permits within 48 hours of surgery. We recommend that you exercise approximately 20 to 30 minutes two or three times a day. The following guide can help you better understand your exercise or activity program that may be supervised by a therapist at the direction of your orthopedic surgeon. As you increase the intensity of your exercise program, you may experience temporary set-backs. If your knee swells or hurts after a particular exercise activity, you should lessen or stop the activity until you feel better. You should Rest, Ice, Compress (with an elastic bandage), and Elevate your knee (R.I.C.E.). Contact your surgeon if the symptoms persist.

Initial Exercise Program



Hamstring Contraction, 10 Repetitions - No movement should occur in this exercise. Lie or sit with your knees bent to about 10 degrees. Pull your heel into the floor, tightening the muscles on the back of your thigh. Hold 5 seconds, then relax. Repeat 10 times.



Quadriceps Contraction, 10 Repetitions - Lie on stomach with a towel roll under the ankle of your operated knee. Push ankle down into the towel roll. Your leg should straighten as much as possible. Hold for 5 seconds. Relax. Repeat 10 times.



Straight Leg Raises, 10 Repetitions - Lie on your back, with uninvolved knee bent, straighten your involved knee. Slowly lift about 6 inches and hold for 5 seconds. Continue lifting in 6-inch increments, hold each time. Reverse the procedure, and return to the starting position. Repeat 10 times. Advanced: Before starting, add weights to your ankle, starting with 1 pound of weight and building up to a maximum of 5 pounds of weight over 4 weeks.

Straight Leg Raises, Standing, 10 Repetitions - Support yourself, if necessary, and slowly lift your leg forward keeping your knee straight. Return to the starting position. Repeat 10 times. Advanced: Before starting, add weights to your ankle, starting with 1 pound of weight and building up to a maximum of 5 pounds of weight over 4 weeks.

