

Instructions Following Anterior Cruciate Ligament Reconstruction Surgery
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Dressing: The knee dressing may be removed 48 hours after surgery for showering. The small tapes (steri-strips) covering the incisions should be left in place. The stocking will stay on for the first 48 hours as well, but may be taken off to shower at the 48 hour mark. The stocking will need to be worn on and off for the following 3 days. (5 days total with the stocking and then you do not need it anymore). The ACL brace is placed over the stocking and is to be worn in the locked position at all times following the surgery.

Showering: Showers are acceptable after 48 hours, no use of bathtubs or Jacuzzi. After removing the dressing covering the knee, keep the steri-strips in place, apply a clear plastic wrap (Saran wrap or press and seal) or water proof bandages. This should be applied for each shower until the sutures are removed. You need to keep your incisions dry. After showering, make sure that you dry the knee area. Your sutures are usually removed at your first post operative appointment.

Bleeding: In some cases, oozing at the point of incision sites can persist for several hours. If bleeding should persist beyond this amount of time, please contact our office.

Swelling: Swelling is common to experience especially around the knee joint. This may cause stiffness and discomfort. This may last for several weeks after surgery. To minimize the swelling, utilize the cold therapy unit supplied to you at the time of surgery or ice packs. The cold therapy should be used as often as possible, especially for the first 48 hours. Run the cold therapy unit/place ice packs for 2 hours on then 1 hour off, except while asleep, regularly the FIRST 48 hours. After 48 hours, run the cold therapy unit/place ice packs for 30 minutes on and 30 minutes off as much as possible until your post operative appointment. Make sure to protect your skin by placing a towel between the pad/ice pack and your skin once the bandages have been removed.

Relief of Pain: For mild pain, use medication such as Tylenol. Take 1-2 tablets every 4 to 6 hours as needed for pain. Do not take more than 8 tablets in a 24-hour period. For severe pain, a prescription for stronger medication was given to you at your pre-op appointment, please take the medication as directed. Do not drink alcohol while taking a prescribed medication. Do not take Tylenol at the same time as the prescription medication as this medication already has some Tylenol in it.

Antibiotic and other Medications: Additional medication may be given if you are using a donor graft. Please take the antibiotic as prescribed starting the night you get home of surgery. If any itching or reaction should develop, please contact our office immediately. You are also instructed to take an 81mg aspirin daily for 2 weeks post op to help prevent the formation of a blood clot.

Diet: Eat light foods after your surgery for 12 hours or diet as instructed by your physician. The day after surgery, drink lots of fluids and eat soft, nutritious foods. An adequate diet is essential for the healing process.

Nausea and Vomiting: Although unusual, both can be experienced after anesthesia in surgery. If you have a tendency for this, please discuss it with the anesthesiologist prior to surgery. Otherwise, it is usually alleviated with a clear liquid diet.

Drowsiness: After anesthesia, drowsiness may persist for quite a while. It should cause no undue concern. The pain medication may also cause drowsiness.

Activities: Crutches have been supplied for your comfort, as well as a brace to limit range of motion. Partial weight bearing is permitted with crutches after surgery. The exercise in which you were instructed should be performed at your tolerance and comfort, starting the day after your surgery. Do not engage in sports or heavy work until your physician gives you permission to do so.

Postoperative office visit: Please refer to the back of your appointment card given to you at your pre op appointment. Your appointment should be listed there, if not please call our office and make sure a post op appointment was made for you.

Signs of Infection: With any surgery it is important to be aware of signs of infection, which can include: unusual looking incision such as increased redness or smell, drainage to be green or yellow, and increased fever. It is normal to have a slight temperature post operative, but above 101.5 degrees; you should contact our office.

Signs of a DVT: If you experience swelling in your calf on the operative leg or pain in your calf with flexion of the foot or with weight bearing, please contact our office immediately. If this occurs at night or over the weekend, please make your way to the emergency room immediately for an ultrasound to rule out a blood clot.

Physical Therapy: This usually will start one week post operative. We will communicate with you when you should start and will give you a prescription for the physical therapy at your post op visit.

Recording of your surgery: Your surgery is recorded and narrated by Dr. Getelman. You will receive a copy at your post operative visit.

Anesthesia: Our anesthesiologist should contact you the night before surgery. They will discuss the medications used to put you to sleep, remind you not to eat or drink anything after midnight the night before surgery and they will discuss with you the nerve block. If you are a candidate, you will receive an injection in the upper thigh which will numb your leg for 12-24 hours to help with pain control.

MOST IMPORTANT!!! The day you get home from surgery you will need to start your hyperextension stretches. This is done for 20 minutes 5 times a day.



Please feel free to contact our office at any time if you have any questions or concerns.

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