

Post Operative Instructions for ACL Reconstruction
Oregon Medical Group Orthopedic and Sports Medicine Clinic

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Call our office if you have any of the following:

- Fever over 101 degrees.
- Yellow, green or foul smelling drainage, or excessive bloody drainage.
- A large red area around the incisions.
- You suspect an allergic reaction to medications or dressing materials. This could be shortness of breath, a rash or redness, hives, etc.
- Severe tenderness or numbness in the leg. If you had a nerve block during surgery, you can expect some numbness in your leg the first day.

Activity to prevent blood clots:

- Keep your leg elevated above your heart to prevent swelling and decrease pain.
- Move your toes and flex your ankles up and down several times an hour to keep the blood circulating.
- Your doctor may instruct you to wear the long white TED stockings for a week after surgery. Remove the stockings several times a day for about an hour.

Dressings/Bandages:

- Your dressing applied in the operating room should remain on, dry, and intact for 3 days following surgery. You may shower, but keep the dressing dry by covering the area with a plastic bag.
- Leave sutures or steri-strips in place for 7-10 days, unless they come off by themselves. You can apply a band-aid to the area for comfort and to help protect it.
- After the dressing is removed, you may shower and let water run over the incisions. Do not soak the area in a bath or swimming pool until the wounds have completely healed, usually 2-3 weeks after surgery.
- If you have a little bleeding on the dressing, reinforce it with a clean towel, gauze or bandage materials. **If you have increased bleeding that soaks the dressing, call our office immediately.**

Medication:

- Take your regular medications as prescribed.
- You have been given a prescription for pain medication. Please take according to the instructions. If your pain becomes too severe, don't try to "tough it out". Call our office if you have severe pain that doesn't respond to pain medication.
- **Some pain medications contain Tylenol. DO NOT take additional Tylenol without discussing with your surgeon. This can lead to liver failure.**

- **Do not drive or drink alcohol while you are on narcotic pain medication.**
- Sometimes pain medication causes nausea or itching. If this is severe and doesn't go away, call our office.
- Pain medication can cause constipation. Drink plenty of water and/or fruit juice. Take milk of magnesia if you become constipated, or use a stool softener such as Dulcolax.
- Your surgeon may ask you to take one 325 mg aspirin daily for 2 weeks to help guard against blood clots.

Activity:

- Minimize activity on the day of surgery.
- Bend your surgical knee as soon as possible after surgery, unless otherwise instructed by the surgeon.
- Elevate the knee and apply an ice pack every hour for 20 minutes, for the first 72 hours. After that, elevate and apply ice 2-3 times/day until the swelling goes down. Put a thin towel between the ice bag and your skin. **Do NOT use heat.**
- You may begin to walk on your leg right away unless otherwise instructed by the nurse at hospital discharge. Your quadriceps muscle may be weak after surgery. Using crutches will help provide support. If you are in a brace, you may unlock it while walking when you can do straight leg lifts comfortably.
- Don't drive until we have seen you for your post-op appointment, as it might be difficult to control the vehicle.
- DO NOT resume sports, use exercise equipment, or do physical activities including lifting, until your doctor tells you its okay.
- You will begin physical therapy shortly after surgery. If you don't already have a consultation scheduled, call our office.
- Regaining full extension of the knee is crucial in the early phases of recovery. It is important to keep the knee fully extended for periods of time during the day. **Do NOT sleep or rest with a pillow in the bend of your leg.** If you find that you are having trouble straightening out your leg, you will need to work on that during physical therapy.
 - Passive Knee Extension: Sit in a chair and place your heel on another chair of equal height. Relax your leg and allow your knee to straighten. Rest in this position for 1-2 minutes, several times a day, to stretch out the hamstrings.

Diet:

- Resume your regular diet. Drink plenty of fluids, but stay away from alcoholic and caffeinated fluids. Try to stay away from smoking.

Your Post-op Appointment:

- Should be scheduled for 10-14 days after surgery. Call 541-242-4812 if you don't have a post-op appointment date and time. If you have sutures, they will be removed at this visit.

Special Instructions:
