

## **Post Op ACL Arthroscopy Instructions**

### **Instructions**

**Activity Level:** You may bear weight as tolerated on the operative leg only while wearing the brace and AFTER THE NERVE BLOCK HAS WORN OFF. Do not attempt to put full weight on the surgical leg until you have regained feeling, movement, and strength (usually within 24 hours)

Before attempting to bear weight on the leg, you should be able to:

- Perform a straight leg raise from a laying position against gravity without any difficulty.
- Be able to perform ankle pumps.
- Be able to tighten your thigh, calf and gluteal muscles.

Use the crutches initially. Once you feel stable, you may discontinue their use, unless otherwise instructed. Your physical therapist will let you know when it is safe for you to ambulate without the brace.

If you also had a **Meniscus Repair**, you will keep the brace locked straight when walking for 6 weeks. If your surgery was on the right knee, DO NOT DRIVE until released by your doctor. You may unlock the brace and gently bend the knee to 30 degrees to get in the car. DO NOT adjust the brace any greater than a 30 degree lockout without specific instructions from your physical therapist.

**Medications:** Take one 325 mg aspirin each day, beginning the day after surgery for 6 weeks to help prevent blood clots. If you are already taking a blood thinning medication like Coumadin (Warfarin) or clopidogrel (Plavix), you do not need to take the aspirin (unless otherwise instructed by your physician).

You can resume your regular medication unless directed otherwise. You may use Tylenol, Motrin or other over the counter medications to help with pain. Narcotic pain medication may have been prescribed. Please take these post-operative pain medications as prescribed on the bottle. Do not take on an empty stomach. Guard against constipation by taking a stool softener (see separate constipation protocol). If you are having difficulty controlling your pain with the prescription you have been provided, please contact our office.

**Exercises:** *(see post-op exercise sheet)*

There are several exercises you can do before your first physical therapy appointment. These include straight leg raises, isometric thigh muscle (quadriceps) contractions, ankle pumps, and bending/straightening of the knee (heel slides). It is important that you do these exercises, not only to maintain range of motion and strength, but to decrease the risk of post-operative blood clots. At a minimum, you should be doing ankle pumps frequently during the first 2-3 days (at least every ½ hour

while awake) to help prevent blood clots, and 50 sets of straight leg exercises a day. A physical therapy appointment should already be set up for you between 5-10 days after surgery.

**Ice/Elevation:**

Keep the polar care/iceman on for the first week after surgery. You should turn it on for 1 hour and off for 1 hour for best results. If you do not have a polar care unit, you may use an ice pack to the top of the knee. Only keep ice packs on for 20 minutes at a time to prevent skin injuries. Keep the knee elevated for the first 1-2 days. Lay flat (not in a recliner) with your foot above your knee and your knee above your head.

**Dressing/Showering**

Keep your dressing clean and dry. You may sponge bathe the first 72 hours after surgery only. A small amount of bloody drainage on the bandage is to be expected. The initial dressing can be removed 72 hours after surgery. If there is still bleeding you can cover the incision with gauze or band aids. If the wounds are dry, you do not need to cover them. If there is a small amount of drainage, cover the incisions with band aids, and replace the ACE. Do not use Neosporin or other ointments on the incisions. Leave the sutures in place until your office visit. EXCEPT while bathing, please keep the ACE bandage on until your follow up appointment. Do not soak your knee in water for a minimum of 2 weeks so no baths, hot tubs, swimming, etc.

**Diet:**

Start with a liquid and soft diet the day of surgery. The next day you may advance your diet as tolerated. Fresh fruits and vegetables are important to prevent constipation.

**Deep Breathing Exercises:**

- It is important that you practice deep breathing and coughing after surgery. Take a slow, deep breath in through your nose. Hold your breath for 2-5 seconds, and then gently and slowly breathe out through your mouth with pursed lips (like blowing out a candle). REPEAT 10-15 times every ½ hour while awake for the first 2-3 days after surgery.

**DO NOT Drive**, operate hazardous machinery, drink alcoholic beverages, or make important personal or business decisions for at least 24 hours after surgery, or while taking your pain medication.

**Report these signs immediately to your doctor:**

Excessive swelling/redness around your incisions, temperature of 101.5 or higher, excessive knee pain, calf pain, excessive drainage of blood or fluid, uncontrolled nausea or vomiting.

Have a responsible adult remain with you for the first 48 hours after surgery. If you have any questions or concerns before your next scheduled appointment, please call our office at 541-472-0603.