

Dr. Michael B. Ellman

**POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS:
ACL RECONSTRUCTION**

DIET

- Start with clear liquids and light foods (jellos, soups, etc.) and gradually progress to your normal diet.

WOUND CARE

- Maintain your operative dressing, loosen bandage if swelling of the foot and ankle occurs.
- It is normal for the knee to bleed and swell following surgery. If blood soaks onto the bandage, reinforce with additional dressing.
- Do NOT remove clear adhesive dressing. This is waterproof and a barrier to infection. This will be changed at your first postoperative visit.
- You may shower postoperative day 3 with the clear adhesive dressing covering your incision.
- NO immersion of operative leg (i.e. bath).
- Avoid smoking – this increases your risk of infection.

MEDICATIONS

- Common side effects of pain medication are nausea, drowsiness, and constipation. If constipation occurs, consider taking an over-the-counter laxative.
- Do not drive a car or operate machinery while taking the narcotic medication.

ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

- Elevate the operative leg to chest level whenever possible to decrease swelling.
- Use crutches to assist with walking – bear as much weight as tolerated on operative leg unless otherwise instructed by the physician.
- Avoid prolonged periods of standing, walking or sitting (without leg elevated) over the first 7-10 days following surgery. Avoid long distance traveling for 1 week.
- NO driving until instructed otherwise by physician.
- May return to sedentary work ONLY or school 3-4 days after surgery, if pain is tolerable.
- Begin exercises 24 hours after surgery 3-4 times a day (quad sets, heel slides, and ankle pumps).
- Start using the continuous passive motion (CPM) machine on the first post-operative day. Use the CPM machine out of the brace for 6-8 hours per day in 2 hour intervals – begin at a rate of 1 cycle/minute, ranging from 0° of extension (straightening) to 40° flexion (bending). Increase flexion by 10° daily to 90° as tolerated.
- Formal physical therapy (PT) will begin after your first post-operative visit.

BRACE

- Your brace should be worn fully extended (straight) at all times (day and night – except for non-weight-bearing exercises/CPM use) until otherwise informed by the physician after first post-operative visit.

ICE THERAPY

- Use ice machine continuously or ice packs (if machine not prescribed) every 2 hours for 15-20 minutes daily until your first post-operative visit – remember to keep leg elevated to level of chest while icing.

EMERGENCIES

Contact Dr. Ellman or his assistant at (303) 233-1223 if any of the following are present:

- Unrelenting pain
- Fever over 101° (it is normal to have a low grade fever for the first day or two following surgery) or chills
- Excessive redness around incisions
- Continuous drainage or bleeding from incision (a small amount of drainage is expected)
- Difficulty breathing or excessive nausea/vomiting



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**If you have an emergency after office hours or on the weekend, contact 303-233-1223 and the Physician's Assistant on call will respond. Do NOT call the hospital or surgery center. If your need requires immediate attention, proceed to the nearest emergency room.