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
Dr. Michael B. Ellman

POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS:
ACL RECONSTRUCTION

**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.