



Orthopedics & Spine Center

Dr. Michael B. Ellman

POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS: PCL 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.
- Remove surgical dressing on the *third* post-operative day. Apply waterproof band-aids or a clean dressing over incisions and change daily.
- To avoid infection, keep surgical incisions clean and *dry* – you may shower by placing a large bag over your brace starting the day after surgery – 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 narcotic medication, or otherwise instructed by physician.

ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

- Elevate the operative leg to chest level whenever possible to decrease swelling.
- Use crutches to assist with heel-toe walking – but DO NOT bear any weight on operative leg unless otherwise instructed by the physician.
- Avoid prolonged periods of standing or walking over the first 7-10 days following surgery.
- Avoid long periods of sitting (without leg elevated) or long distance traveling for 1 week.
- 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 (straight leg raises, quad sets, heel slides, and ankle pumps) unless otherwise instructed. The goal is to reach full extension (straightening) and 80-90 degrees knee flexion (bending) by your first post-op visit.
- Use the continuous passive motion 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 to 40° flexion that is comfortable for you – 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) for 15-20 minutes every 2 hours daily until your first post-operative visit.

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 you have an emergency that requires immediate attention, proceed to the nearest emergency room.