

# ACL Reconstruction Helpful Hints

## Pre-Operative Instruction

- No food or drink after midnight before your surgery.
- If your surgery date is within seven days, stop taking all vitamins or supplements (fish oil, turmeric, etc.) as well as non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (ibuprofen, Aleve, Advil, or Motrin)
- A few days prior to surgery you will receive a phone call from the anesthesia department to go over your daily prescription medication list.
- Before surgery, you will be offered a nerve block. This will help manage pain and reduce the need for narcotic medication.
- During the surgery, a numbing medication like Novocaine will be injected.
- This will help alleviate some pain for several hours afterward. It is important to take your pain medication before the numbing effect wears off.

## Post-Operative Medications

- Normally, Oxycodone is taken every six hours; however, if the pain is severe, it can be used every four hours.
- Common side effects of Oxycodone include nausea, constipation, and itching. To help with nausea, it is recommended to take the medication with food. We strongly advise taking an over-the-counter stool softener, such as Colace, to prevent constipation. If you begin to experience itching while using the narcotic medication, we suggest taking Benadryl and calling our office for further guidance.
- As your pain subsides, you can transition to NSAIDs or Tylenol for pain relief. Patients with normal liver function should not consume more than 4000 mg of Tylenol per day.
- You will also be prescribed a 24-hour oral antibiotic. Please take the first dose around dinner after you return home from surgery, and make sure to take it with food.
- Lastly, you may need to take 325 mg of aspirin for six weeks following surgery. We will discuss this with you before the procedure.

## Physical Therapy & Activity

- You may return to sedentary work only or school in 4 to 7 days after surgery as long as your pain is tolerable.
- Avoid long distance, traveling in cars or by airplane during the two weeks after surgery to avoid increasing your risk of developing blood clots.
- Perform ankle pumps with range of motion - two reps of ten every hour you're awake, promotes blood circulation, and helps prevent blood pooling which can lead to clots.
- The goal of physical therapy is to assess how your body has responded to the surgical procedure, promote healing, and ensure a safe return to activity. You will start physical therapy after your first post-operative appointment, you may start sooner if you go to physical therapy.
- An important goal following surgery is to minimize swelling around your surgical site. The best way to achieve this is to frequently apply ice. This is most important within the first 48 hours following your surgery. Apply for 15 minutes every hour that you're awake always keep a barrier in between your skin and the ice. This will help prevent frostbite.

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### Bandage and Brace

- Your first set of incisions was closed with absorbable stitches that are covered with small white tape called Steri-Strips. Your second set of incisions may have been closed with nylon stitches or staples, which will be removed at your first postoperative appointment.
- You will not be able to see your incisions. They will be covered by a large white fluffy dressing that is held in place with tape and a compression stocking over the top. You must keep your postoperative dressing on. Do not remove your dressing. We will remove your dressing when you come in for your postop appointment. You may shower, however you must keep your post-operative dressing, clean and dry. We recommend covering your dressing with plastic wrap or using shower sleeves.
- As the surgery is done, arthroscopically and water is used, occasionally there will be a small amount of blood mixed with water in the dressing. This is nothing to worry about however, if you are noticing a large amount of bleeding, please call the office and wait for further instructions.
- Do not remove the dressing. Do not take a bath or go into a pool lake or ocean until four weeks after surgery.
- Crutches will be given to you before surgery if you do not have them already.
- You will have a brace locked in full extension (straight out). Do not change the hinge settings until directed by Dr. Raphael.
- Keep the brace on at all times except while showering, icing your knee, during towel roll exercises, or during range of motion exercises.

### THINGS TO WATCH OUT FOR

**If you experience any of the following, please call our office at 315-329-2555**

- Pain is increasing every hour despite the pain medication.
- Increasing redness around the surgical site.
- Excessive pain, and swelling around your surgery.
- Fever greater than 101.5°
- Unable to keep food down for more than one day.
- Excessive drainage saturates your dressing.