

POST OPERATIVE PATIENT INFORMATION
FOR ACL RECONSTRUCTION SURGERY

An incision was made on the front of your knee for the purpose of harvesting a tendon graft. The inside of your joint was visualized with the arthroscope, and the ligament reconstruction was performed.

BANDAGES: The bandage applied to your incisions may become moist or bloodstained; however this is normal and results from fluid placed in the joint during surgery. If your bandage becomes saturated with bright red blood, please call me. Keep the bandages dry when bathing ("sponge bathing" is the simplest and easiest). Keep the bandages in place until I see you in the office for your first post operative visit. I will give you appropriate instructions regarding further bandages and wraps, as well as showering or bathing at that time.

ACTIVITY: For the first few days after surgery you will want to limit your activities and rest your leg. Keep your leg elevated with a pillow under your calf and use the cold therapy device provided to minimize swelling and pain. Use the CPM (continuous motion machine) for at least 2-3 hours a session, three times daily (use it more if you like.) Start with the CPM machine set for motion from 0-40 degrees and increase it 5 degrees in the morning and 5 degrees in the afternoon each day as tolerated. (Return the CPM machine when you have comfortably reached 90 degrees.) I also want you to spend at least 6 hours out of each 24 hour day with your knee fully extended in the brace (this is easiest to do while sleeping). When applying the straight leg brace, be sure to have your knee as straight as possible. When standing up or walking, please use the crutches provided and have the straight leg brace applied to your leg. With the brace supporting your knee, you may bear as much weight on your foot as tolerated (unless I tell you otherwise). There may be a sensation of splashing of fluid within your joint, however this is normal and should not cause you concern.

PAIN CONTROL: You will find that your knee is swollen and uncomfortable for the first few days after surgery. To reduce this, use the cold therapy device and elevate the joint as instructed. You have also been provided with medication for pain relief; use it as instructed and please take it with food to avoid stomach upset. If the medication provided is inadequate, or if you are about to run out, please call my office during daily office hours. During your post-operative recovery, please keep track of how much pain medication you have remaining to ensure that you have sufficient medication for any upcoming weekends or holidays as prescriptions are not refilled on the weekends.

PRECAUTIONS: If you develop a fever of 101 degrees Fahrenheit or greater, if the pain you feel is much greater than that expected, or if you develop severe redness or swelling, please call my office. (You should expect some calf and ankle/foot swelling, as this occurs in all cases, but I am referring to more than you would expect.) If you develop a reaction to the pain medication provided, stop taking it and call my office. Please avoid direct sunlight on the incisions until the scars are no longer red.

Note: I feel it is appropriate to remind you that although the external incisions are small, you have nonetheless had a major operative procedure within your knee joint. Scientific research has shown that complete healing after ACL surgery takes 12-24 months. Therefore a very specific and thorough rehabilitation protocol has been developed to guide you in your post operative exercise and activities. You will begin this rehabilitation program after your first postoperative visit. I will modify the protocol, if necessary, based upon your individual rate of healing and recovery.

Thank you for trusting me to provide your medical care for your shoulder disorder. If you have suggestions on how I might improve your recovery, please discuss this with me at our office appointment.


Scott Fischer MD