

Post Operative Instructions for ACL Reconstruction
Oregon Medical Group Orthopedic and Sports Medicine Clinic

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Call our office if you have any of the following:

- Fever over 101 degrees.
- Yellow, green or foul smelling drainage, or excessive bloody drainage.
- A large red area around the incisions.
- You suspect an allergic reaction to medications or dressing materials. This could be shortness of breath, a rash or redness, hives, etc.
- Severe tenderness or numbness in the leg. If you had a nerve block during surgery, you can expect some numbness in your leg the first day.

Activity to prevent blood clots:

- Keep your leg elevated above your heart to prevent swelling and decrease pain.
- Move your toes and flex your ankles up and down (ankle pumps) several times an hour to keep the blood circulating.
- Keep the long white TED stockings on your surgical leg until you are seen for your post-op appointment. You will wear the stockings for a week after surgery. Remove the stockings several times a day for about an hour.

Dressings/Bandages:

- Your dressing applied in the operating room should remain on, dry, and intact until your post-op appointment. You may shower, but keep the dressing dry by covering the area with a plastic bag.
- After the dressing is removed, band-aids will be applied to the area for comfort and protection. At this point, you may remove the band-aids, shower and let water run over the incisions. Replace the band-aids after you shower.
- Do not soak the area in a bath or swimming pool until the wounds have completely healed, usually 3 weeks after surgery.
- If you have a little bleeding on the dressing, reinforce it with a clean towel, gauze or bandage materials. **If you have increased bleeding that soaks the dressing, call our office immediately.**

Medication:

- Take your regular medications as prescribed.
- Prescription medications after surgery:
 - Pain medication (usually oxycodone): Please take according to the instructions. If your pain becomes too severe, don't try to "tough it out". Call our office if you have severe pain that doesn't respond to pain medication. Your pain will gradually lessen

after surgery and you will need less pain medication. Remember, pain medication is addictive, so try to wean yourself off them as your knee heals.

- Additionally, take Tylenol Extra Strength 2 tablets every six hours, independent of pain level. Take Tylenol for 5-7 days. Do not take Tylenol if your narcotic medication is anything other than Oxycodone.
- Toradol (pain medication). Take with food or milk to avoid stomach upset or bleeding. Do not take Toradol if you have stomach ulcers, gastritis or heartburn. Stop Toradol if you develop significant abdominal discomfort. Toradol needs to be taken around the clock for three days but narcotic pain medication needs to be taken on as needed basis. .
- Cephalexin (anti-biotic). Take for the first 2 days after surgery.
- Enteric coated aspirin, 325 mg., 1 tablet daily starting 2 days after surgery for 4 weeks to help prevent blood clots.
- Side effects of pain medication:
 - Nausea. You have been given a prescription for Phenergan that you can fill if needed. If nausea severe and doesn't go away, call our office.
 - Constipation. Drink plenty of water and/or fruit juice. Take milk of magnesia or Colace if you become constipated, or use a stool softener such as Dulcolax.
 - Itching. These symptoms are often relieved with diphenhydramine (e.g. Benadryl). Call our office if itching becomes a problem.
- **Some pain medications contain Tylenol. DO NOT take additional Tylenol without discussing with your surgeon. This can lead to liver failure.**
- **Do not drive or drink alcohol while you are on narcotic pain medication.**

Activity:

- Minimize activity for 48 hours after surgery.
- Elevate the knee and apply an ice pack every hour for 20 minutes, for the first 72 hours. After that, elevate and apply ice 2-3 times/day until the swelling goes down. Put a thin towel between the ice bag and your skin. **Do NOT use heat.** Do not put a pillow under the knee, instead put it under the calf to keep the brace straight.
- Start doing quadriceps tightening exercises (quad sets), straight leg raises, and ankle pumps as soon as you are able after surgery. You may remove your brace or not depending on your comfort. You should do your exercises every hour while you are awake.
- On the day following surgery, begin range of motion exercises (bending and straightening). Do these exercises at least five times a day and remove the brace to do them. Your goal should be to straighten your leg completely and bend your knee to 90 degrees within two weeks.
- Do not put weight on your surgical leg. Wear your knee brace, but remove it for icing and to do your range of motion exercises.
- Don't drive until we have seen you for your post-op appointment, as it might be difficult to control the vehicle.

- DO NOT resume sports, use exercise equipment, or do physical activities including lifting, until your doctor tells you its okay.
- You will begin physical therapy shortly after surgery. If you don't already have a consultation scheduled, call our office.

Patient guidelines (see note below for meniscus repairs)

1) Weight bearing:

Weeks 1 and 2:	non weight bearing on operated leg
Weeks 3 and 4:	50% weight bearing with crutches
Weeks 5 and 6:	weight bearing as tolerated with crutches
After 6 weeks:	full weight bearing without crutches

2) Bracing:

Weeks 1 and 2:	brace locked in extension
Weeks 3 through 8:	brace unlocked and worn for ambulation only

3) Return to activities:

Stationary bike	2-3 weeks
Stairmaster	3 months
Jogging	5 months
High intensity sports	9-12 months

NOTE: If you had a meniscus repair, do not put weight on the operated leg for the first four weeks after the surgery. For the following two weeks, put 50% weight. At six weeks after the surgery, start putting full weight on the operated leg. Additionally, flex the knee only to 90 degrees during the first 4 weeks after the surgery.

Diet:

- Resume your regular diet. Drink plenty of fluids, but stay away from alcoholic and caffeinated fluids. Try to stay away from smoking.

Your Post-op Appointment:

- Should be scheduled for 3-5 days after surgery. Call 541-242-4812 if you don't have a post-op appointment date and time. If you have sutures, they will be removed at this visit.

Special Instructions:
