



## ANTERIOR CRUCIATE LIGAMENT (ACL) RECONSTRUCTION POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS GREGORY LOREN, MD, FAAOS

- Dressings:** You can remove the dressings the day after surgery. Leave the Steri-Strips™ in place.
- Bathing:** The incisions are to remain dry. Showering is acceptable after 24 hours. Wrap around the area with Saran Wrap® or using water proof dressings (such as NexCare®) over the incision sites to prevent water leakage. Bathing with the leg supported out of the water is preferable.
- Bleeding:** In some cases, oozing at the incisions persists for several hours. Contact our office if drainage persists.
- Swelling:** Postoperative swelling about the knee is common and may cause temporary stiffness and discomfort lasting up to several weeks. To minimize the swelling, cold compresses or ice may be applied for 20 minutes each hour for the first 48-72 hours and subsequently 3-4 times daily, as needed. The skin should be carefully protected. Commercially available cryotherapy units are available for purchase, but insurance coverage varies.
- A sensation of fluid within the knee joint is expected as irrigant from the procedure is reabsorbed. Occasional clicking with knee motion is common as muscle coordination is recovered. Both are generally alleviated with the initiation of the postoperative exercise program.
- Pain Relief:** For moderate pain, prescription medication will be provided. Cold compresses often aid substantially in relieving pain. Pain medication should not be taken on an empty stomach or with alcohol. Driving is not advised until pain medication is discontinued.
- Diet:** After surgery, fluids and soft nutritious foods are preferred with the gradual progression to a regular diet. Adequate nutrition is essential for the healing process.
- Nausea:** Although unusual, nausea may be experienced. Any tendency for this should be discussed with the anesthesiologist. Otherwise, postoperative nausea is generally relieved with a clear liquid diet and time.
- Drowsiness:** After anesthesia, drowsiness may persist for quite a while but should cause no undue concern. Driving is prohibited until this resolves.
- Activity:** Crutches have been supplied and a brace applied to limit movement. Weight bearing is not permitted. The brace may be removed when you are at rest or exercising, but should be worn during sleep to encourage full knee extension. Generally, 5-7 days recovery is needed before returning to work or school.
- Postop Visit:** If your surgery scheduler has not set up a postoperative appointment for you, please call the office to schedule. The postoperative course is tailored to each individual's specific injury. Virtually every patient's experience with arthroscopic surgery differs.
- Q:** How long does the surgery take?  
**A:** Approximately 2 hours.
- Q:** Will my family be able to visit immediately after surgery?  
**A:** Unfortunately, no. The average stay in the first stage recovery area is about 1 hour.

**If additional questions or concerns arise, please do not hesitate to contact us at (760) 943-6700.**