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## **POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS**

### **ACL Reconstruction**

**If you have any questions after surgery, call the office 713.441.3667. Do not send a MyChart message.**

#### **DIET**

- Begin with clear liquids and light foods (jellos, soups, etc.).
- Progress to your normal diet if you are not nauseated.

#### **WOUND CARE**

- Keep your operative dressing in place. Occasionally, blood may soak through the bandages. Don't be alarmed, just add a new dressing (gauze) on top.
- Remove the dressing on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day after surgery and apply a dry dressing. Gauze or large band-aids work well.
- Keep your incisions dry until the sutures are removed. Cover with a plastic bag or plastic wrap such as Press N' Seal.

#### **MEDICATIONS**

- Local anesthetics (pain medications) are injected in the surgical site during surgery. Also, a nerve block by the anesthesiologist may be done just prior to surgery. These medications will wear off within 8-12 hours.
- Most patients will require narcotic pain medication after surgery for several days.
- Side effects of pain medication include: nausea, drowsiness, constipation.
  - Nausea-to help prevent nausea, take medications with food. If you are having difficulty with nausea or vomiting, please contact the office, 713.441.3667.
  - Drowsiness-Be careful in regards to drowsiness and do not drive or operate machinery after taking narcotic pain medication.
  - Constipation-to help prevent constipation take a stool softener, such as Colace® 100mg twice daily. If this does not work you may take a laxative or use an enema if needed. Ask your pharmacist.
  - Unless instructed otherwise, you may take Aleve® 1-2 pills in the am and the pm or Advil® 400mg 3 times per day if needed for pain control. This may also help you wean off the narcotic pain medication.
- Please resume all home medications, unless instructed otherwise.
- With new laws in place, you will need to pick up a paper prescription for any refill of a narcotic pain medication. This medication cannot be called into your pharmacy. **Pain medications will not be refilled after hours or on the weekends. Do NOT send a pain medication refill request via MyChart.**

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#### KNEE BRACE

- Wear your brace at all times, except for bathing and exercises).
- The brace will be locked in extension in the beginning. Your physical therapist will unlock the brace when the time comes.

#### CRUTCHES

- You will be given crutches after surgery. You may only need these for a few days after surgery or up to 6 weeks or more. You will be given instructions on length of need.
- You will be told how much weight you can put down, usually weight bear as tolerated or touch-down weight bearing.

#### CPM

- If you were given a CPM, start on the day of surgery. The setting should be  $-5-45^{\circ}$ . Advance at least  $15^{\circ}$  per day as tolerated up to  $90^{\circ}$ . Use the CPM at least 6 hours per day. You may sleep with your leg in the CPM. You may remove your brace or wear it in the CPM. The CPM helps reduce pain and swelling.

#### ICE THERAPY

- Begin ice immediately after surgery and ice continuously over the bulky dressing. Once the bulky dressing is removed you may ice for 20 minutes every 2 hours. Ice can significantly reduce the amount of pain and swelling you experience. Do not put ice directly on your skin.
- The ice machine (cryo-cuff) is a convenient way to ice, but ice packs work as well.

#### EXERCISE

- Formal physical therapy (PT) will begin after your first post-operative appointment. You will be given the prescription for PT at that visit. **The day after surgery** start working on your home exercise program. Perform 15 reps/set at least 3 times per day.



Heel slides-slide heel toward buttock and straighten.

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Range of motion of the knee.



Quad sets. Tighten thigh muscles and push knee down to straighten.

#### ACTIVITY

- Sleeping will be difficult for most people for several weeks after surgery-this will get better. You will need to sleep with your brace on.
- Do not engage in activities which increase pain/swelling (squatting, running or lifting) until cleared by your physician, PA or PT.
- Avoid long periods of or long distance travel. It is recommended not travel long distances or fly for at least 2 weeks after surgery.
- NO driving until cleared by physician or PA.
- May return to sedentary work or school 3-4 days after surgery as pain permits. Many patients with sedentary jobs take 1 week off from work.

#### EMERGENCIES

- Contact the office, 713.441.3667 for any of the following:
  - Painful swelling or numbness, unrelenting pain, Fever over 101°F (it is normal to have low grade fevers after surgery), chills, painful redness around the incisions (a small amount of drainage is expected), excessive nausea or vomiting.
  - If you have difficulty breathing or another emergency that requires immediate attention, call 911 or go to the Emergency Room.
- If you have an urgent situation after hours or on the weekend, call the office at 713.441.3667, to be connected to the answering service. The on-call provider will be contacted.

#### FOLLOW UP

- You will be provided with a post-operative visit date and time in the folder you receive at the time of surgery (**see pink form in your folder**). If you have any questions regarding your post-operative course or appointment, please call the office, 713.441.3667.