
Post-Operative Information
for
ACL Reconstruction

*The following are general guidelines that may vary depending on the individual, the details of the procedure, and/or the anesthesia that was administered.

Diet

- Post-operative nausea and vomiting is a common side-effect of anesthesia.
- Progress your diet as tolerated.
- Drink plenty of non-alcoholic, non-caffeinated fluids.

Wound care

- Remove surgical dressings 48 hours after surgery and place bandages over the incision sites.
 - Do NOT remove or apply ointment to the tape strips (steri-strips) over the incisions. These will be removed at your post-op visit.
- After removing the dressings, shower as normal, letting water run over the incision sites.
- Do not submerge your body such as in a tub, pool, hot tub, or ocean.
- A small amount of drainage and swelling in the affected extremity is common.
 - If the incision is draining, reinforce with sterile gauze and occlusive dressings.
- Swelling in the affected extremity is common.
 - To decrease, ice and elevate the affected extremity above the heart
- If there is excessive drainage and/or redness surrounding the incision or red streaks coming away from it, increased pain, and/or increased temperature please call the office immediately.

Icing

- Ice your hip 5-6 times a day, 20 minutes at a time, for the first 2-3 days.
- If you purchased an ice machine (Polar Care), use the above intervals for at least 3-4 hours a day.
 - Be sure to put a thin sheet between the ice and your skin, as the ice can cause frost-bite.

Activity

- You may bear as much weight as tolerated on the operative leg in the knee immobilizer (KI) with crutches as needed.
- Do not place pillows under knee (i.e. do not maintain the knee in a flexed/bent position), but rather place pillows under the foot/ankle so the knee is fully straightened.
 - Try to keep the knee as straight as possible.
- You may remove the KI for flexion (bending) and quadriceps sets done in a non-weight bearing position (sitting or lying).

- Schedule PT to begin after your first post-operative appointment.
- Avoid prolonged periods of sitting (without the leg elevated) or long distance traveling for 2 weeks.
- You have been given home exercises in this packet that you may initiate the day after surgery.

School/Work

- If pain is tolerable, you may return to school or sedentary work 3-4 days after surgery.

Driving

- **No** driving until you are off narcotic pain medications.
- You may drive when you feel your braking time is not affected by your surgery and you can do so safely.
- For right leg surgery, this may be 4-6 weeks. It may be sooner on the left.
- Please use caution in the beginning and consider first practicing in an empty parking lot.

Pain Management

- You will be prescribed a narcotic pain medication to be taken *as needed* for pain.
 - Use the least amount as possible to alleviate pain.
- Common side effects include nausea, vomiting, and drowsiness.
 - To decrease these, take medication with food.
 - If nausea and vomiting persist, call the office.
- Narcotic pain medications can cause constipation.
 - Take a stool softener daily (i.e. Colace[®], Senokot[®], milk of magnesia), drink extra fluids, and increase your daily fiber intake.
- Narcotic pain medications like Vicodin[®] and Percocet[®] contain Tylenol[®] (acetaminophen).
 - Do not exceed more than 4000mg of acetaminophen per day.
- Do not drive or operate machinery while taking narcotic pain medications.
- Do not drink alcohol while taking narcotic pain medications.
- Use ibuprofen (max 1800mg/day) in addition to narcotic pain medicine to:
 - help with pain and swelling
 - smooth out the post-operative “peaks and valleys”
 - reduce overall amount of pain medications required
 - increase the time intervals between narcotic pain medication usage
- If you received a block during surgery, this will wear off in 6-8 hours. You should start taking medication before this time. We suggest taking pain medication prior to bed the first night to avoid waking up in severe pain.
- Call the office if you continue to have uncontrollable pain.
- Please refer to the pain contract for additional information.

Follow-up Care and Questions

- **Please be aware that we work out of 2 facilities:**
 - **Monday, Wednesday, Thursday** at 1598 South County Trail in East Greenwich
 - **Tuesday** at 100 Butler Drive, Providence****Please verify the location prior to your appointment****
- If you have any further questions, call Dr. Tabaddor's Administrative Assistant, Jackie, at (401) 402-1040.
- **You will be seeing Arlene Kavanagh, PA-C, Dr. Tabaddor's physician assistant, for your post-operative appointment.**

EMERGENCIES

- Call the office at (401) 402-1040 if you experience:
 - Incision opens
 - Redness, streaking, and/or pus at incision sites
 - Uncontrollable bleeding
 - Pain uncontrolled by pain medicine
 - Painful swelling
 - Severe pain or redness in calf
 - Difficulty breathing or chest pain
 - Fever > 101° F for 24 hours or shaking chills