

# Post-operative Instructions for ACL Reconstruction

## Dr. Arthur Christiano

### General Goals

- Full extension by 2 weeks
- Flexion 0-90 degrees by 6 weeks
- Flexion 0-120 degrees by 3 months
- Brace is locked in full extension for ambulation for the first 4 weeks post-op, then open (0-90) for weeks 4-6
- No Active Quadriceps from 0-30 degrees until 6 weeks
- If a meniscal repair was performed, no flexion past 90 degrees until 6 weeks post-op\*
- Driving (once off pain medication): Left leg @ 2 weeks, Right leg @ 4-6 weeks

### Day 1

- Full weight bearing as tolerated with crutches and the brace locked out straight
- Keep leg elevated as much as possible (toes above your nose)
- Use ice pack or cryotherapy system
- Start quad sets: hold for 6 seconds, 30 repetitions, 4 times daily

### Dressing/Wound Care

- Do NOT get the bandage wet.
- After 3 days you may remove the bandages and dressings (**not the white steri-strips**).
- Leave the white steri-strips on the skin until they fall off on their own.
  - You may place band-aids over the small wounds.
- You may notice some drainage from the wound, this is normal.
  - If this persists more than five days please call the office as a precaution (this can still be normal)
  - On the 3<sup>rd</sup> day you may shower and let the water run over the wound, do not scrub the wound, just blot it dry. (No baths, pools, or hot tubs until told.)
- Some swelling or bruising around the knee or leg is expected and can last up to several weeks.
- Low-grade temperatures up to 101 are common after surgery, please call if temperature rises above 101.4.

## Post-operative Instructions for ACL Reconstruction (continued)

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#### **Medications** Take as prescribed

- Avoid taking any anti-inflammatories including Ibuprofen (Motrin and Advil) or Aleve (Naproxen) until cleared by your surgeon.
- You may take Tylenol as needed for pain- use as directed, do not take greater than 4 grams of Tylenol per day.
- You will have received a prescription for pain medication.
  - Do not operate machinery or drive while taking this medication.
  - May cause nausea or vomiting.
- You may have been given a prescription for an anti-nausea medication.
  - Take as directed for any nausea associated with the pain medication.
- Any severe itching, hives or difficulty breathing, please call immediately.

#### **Exercise**

- Perform straight leg raise exercises 20 times three times a day.
- Make sure you have minimal pain when doing exercises.
  - If pain is severe, then perform less exercise or stop completely until pain decreases.
- Again, you may put as much weight as tolerated on your knee.

#### **Physical Therapy**

- On your first visit after surgery you will be given a prescription for physical therapy.

#### **Return Visit**

- If you do not already have a scheduled post-operative visit, please call for an appointment on the next business day.
- The first post-operative visit is usually 7-10 days after day of surgery unless instructed otherwise.
- If you have any problems, do not wait for an appointment, please call the office.