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Somers Orthopedic Surgery and Sports Medicine Group

Post-operative ACL Reconstruction Instructions

Pain Medication:

- After surgery it is normal to have some discomfort. Fill your prescriptions and take the pain medication as directed, Percocet 1 tab every 6 hours as needed for severe pain. For minor pain take Tylenol or Advil.
- Do not take additional Tylenol if you are taking prescription pain medications with Tylenol in it (Percocet/Tylenol w/ codeine)
- Advil (ibuprofen/Motrin) may be used IN ADDITION to the prescription pain medication and may be taken in between doses of pain medications but do not exceed maximum daily dose as indicated on the bottle.
- Take one 81 mg baby aspirin daily for 6 weeks to lower the risk of blood clots

Dressing and Wound Care:

- The incision is closed with sutures and steri strips to allow the wound to heal with minimal scar formation.
- Keep the dressing clean and dry for 48 hours after surgery. You may then remove the dressing and shower.
- Remove the brace and all bandages (leave steri strips in place). Stand in the shower putting most of your weight on the non-operative leg. Let water run over the sutures, but do not scrub the suture with soap. Pat the sutures and incisions dry when done.
- DO NOT REMOVE steri strips- they may fall off on their own or maybe removed on your first follow up visit.
- When finished place gauze over the wound and Band-Aids over the portal sites, then rewrap with ACE bandage and reapply the brace.
- DO NOT immerse the wound in water- no baths, hot tubs or swimming with sutures

Ice and Elevation:

- It's a good idea to keep your leg elevated for the first 72-hours after surgery. Place pillows under the foot and calf. NEVER put anything under the knee. Arrange pillows so that your foot is higher than your knee.
- After the first three or four days it is not necessary to elevate your leg unless you notice persistent swelling around the foot.
- Ice the knee up to 15 minutes of each hour, or use the cryotherapy machine as instructed to help with post-op pain and swelling

Crutches:

- Use both crutches following surgery. Put as much weight as you can tolerate on the leg unless told otherwise by your doctor.
- Usually you will be able to stop using crutches after you have regained good muscle down- about one or two weeks after surgery.

Brace:

- The purpose of the brace is to protect the graft during the first month of healing. These points are important to remember:
 1. The brace is worn for approximately 3-4 weeks.
 2. For the first two weeks, you must wear it at ALL TIMES, including while sleeping and when walking for the first two weeks.
 3. When sleeping, the brace must be locked in the straight position for the first two weeks every night. After the second week you may stop using it while sleeping.
 4. After the second week it can be unlocked for sitting.
 5. The only time the brace is removed is during physical therapy, showering and when using the CPM device.
 6. Your physical therapist can guide you about discontinuing your brace around week three or four. It is acceptable to stop using the brace after you have regained excellent quadriceps control, have full range of motion, and have good control on stairs.

Physical Therapy:

- Start physical therapy 2 to 3 days after your surgery. Take the physical therapy prescription and rehabilitation guidelines. Try to get to physical therapy three times per week.

Follow up:

- Please call the office to schedule your first post-operative appointment 5-10 days after surgery (845) 230-5104.
- A low-grade temp (99F-101F) is common. Please call the office if your temperature is consistently elevated over 101F
- It is also common to develop discoloration of the leg after surgery. Normally after surgery some blood goes into the soft tissues beneath the skin. Over the first few weeks this can lead to black and blue of the skin. Apply ice to the area if it is painful. To help resolve the discoloration, apply a heating pad set on low over the area for an hour or two. Over time the discoloration should resolve.

If you should experience any shortness of breath, calf pain, difficulty breathing or chest tightness go to the nearest emergency department or call 911.