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**Hancock Orthopaedic Surgery
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ACL Surgery: Postoperative Instructions**

IMPORTANT

Successful rehab after ACL surgery has been directly associated with the ability to fully straighten out your knee at the end of rehab. Following these instructions will help ensure that we do everything possible to achieve this goal. Elevation of the leg along with cold therapy is critical in the first weeks after surgery in an effort to reduce swelling. This ensures that the knee will move easily to regain motion once therapy is started the second week.

- Your leg has been placed in a hinged brace after surgery for comfort and to protect your new graft.
- The brace has been locked at 0 degrees to keep your leg as straight as possible after surgery
- This allows you to walk on the leg without the leg giving way and to prevent you from losing the ability to fully straighten your leg.
- This brace should be worn AT ALL TIMES when you are out of bed after surgery
- This brace may be taken off when you are in bed and laying down so that you may apply the cryotherapy unit (polar care ice) over the dressing.
- The optimal position of the leg after surgery is for you to be lying flat with your ankle higher than your heart , in an effort to reduce swelling.
- **Place pillows under your ANKLE to allow your knee to sag backwards to keep it straight**
- You may practice bending the knee with no weight on it, but should return it to straight position when you are resting & elevating
- DO NOT sit with a pillow under your knee, as this will lead you to being unable to fully straighten your leg after surgery.
- If for some reason your brace becomes unlocked or loose, please contact my office for instruction on how to fix this issue.
- You will come out of your brace with your physical therapist for therapy, but will not be released from your brace until you can demonstrate the ability to walk without crutches or a limp.

DIET

- You may resume your regular diet once you tolerate liquids/bland food without nausea

MEDICATION

- Take the pain medication as prescribed, WITH FOOD

- While taking pain medications, you may NOT operate a vehicle, heavy machinery, or appliances, or drink alcoholic beverages
- If you have an allergic reaction to the medication, stop taking it and call my office.
- If you are not allergic, take one Aspirin 81 mg twice a day after eating to prevent blood clots
- Please keep in mind that constipation is a very common side effect of taking narcotic pain medication. Take precautions to prevent constipation:
 - Drink plenty of water (6-8 - 8 ounce glasses a day)
 - Avoid alcohol, caffeine & dairy products
 - Eat plenty of fiber (fruits, vegetables & whole grains)
 - Take an over the counter stool softener such as Colace or Dulcolax or Miralax

ACTIVITY

___ You may walk as much as the dressing allows.

___ You are non weight bearing and must use crutches.

- You may practice quadriceps muscle tightening and straight leg raises several times every hour
- Please continue to move your ankle up and down and tighten and relax your calf muscles several times every hour to help reduce swelling and prevent blood clots
- Please use your crutches until your first post operative visit
- If comfortable, you may bear weight on your leg with the assistance of crutches
- It is important to continuously elevate your knee above your heart until your swelling is completely down.
- Please keep ice applied to the knee for the first 72 hours or as long as pain or swelling is persists. Do not apply ice directly to the skin, or allow water to leak on to your dressing.

DRESSING CARE

- Keep the dressing clean and dry.
- It is normal to get some bloody drainage through the bandage. DO NOT BE ALARMED.
- If the dressing gets soaked with drainage, please reinforce with a dry sterile dressing.
- Loosen the ace wrap around your knee if it becomes too tight or painful.
- Remove all dressings **3 days** after surgery. If there is still some wound seepage, apply a fresh STERILE gauze over the incisions and secure with tape or an ace wrap, otherwise leave open to air.
- DO NOT TOUCH OR REMOVE THE SUTURES!

SHOWERING

- You may sponge bathe for the first 72 hours, taking care to keep the dressing clean and dry.

- You may remove the dressing in 3 days and shower after surgery unless told otherwise. DO NOT immerse the knee under water. DO NOT rub/scrub the incision. DO NOT apply any ointments. After showering pat the incisions dry & place new Band-Aids over the sutures.

EMERGENCY/FOLLOW - UP

- Please notify my office at **(317) 477-6683** if you develop any fever (above 101), unexpected warmth, redness or swelling. Please call if your toes become cold, purple, numb, or there is excessive bleeding.
- Please call the office within 24 hours at **(317) 477-6683** to schedule a follow up appointment within **7-10 days** from surgery if not already scheduled.
- Narcotic pain medication refills cannot be called into your pharmacy and the prescription must be picked up at our office. No pain medication refills can be provided after 3pm on Fridays or over the weekend.