

## Postoperative Instructions: Knee ACL Reconstruction

### When You Get Home:

- Rest for the remainder of the day.
- Be Safe- stay in the care of responsible adult the first 24 hours.
- Use Ice as much as possible (towel or cloth between skin and the ice pack)
  - 20 minutes on/20 minutes off for regular ice packs
  - If you are using a Cold Therapy unit, use it according to the manufacturer's instructions.

### Pain Medication:

- Take your pain medication- it's better to stay ahead of the pain.
- Oral Narcotic pain medicines (Vicodin/Hydrocodone, Percocet, Tramadol, Codeine) help with pain, but can cause:
  - Drowsiness: Be Safe, don't drive, operate machinery, don't mix it with alcohol.
  - Stomach upset: Take with food, or try over the counter Zantac or Tums.
  - Constipation: Drink enough fluids, use fiber supplements (Metamucil, Senokot)
    - Take Prune juice or Milk of Magnesia if still constipated after 2 days
- You may take anti-inflammatory medication to help with pain and swelling.
  - Some patients are prescribed Toradol (Ketorolac): take every 6 hours for 4 days.
    - Ok to take with Pain Medications, not with other anti-inflammatories
  - After 4 days of Toradol, you can take other anti-inflammatory medicines like:
    - Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), Naproxen (Aleve), Lodine, Mobic, Celebrex
  - Go easy on the anti-inflammatory medications if you have stomach problems.

### Dressing and Wound Care:

- Keep the surgical dressing on for 2 days.
  - Then you may remove the dressing, take a shower (No cover, bag needed).
    - It's okay for the small incisions to get wet, just gently dab them dry.
    - Then put new gauze dressings or square band-aids over the incisions.
  - Keep using the white stocking until your first postoperative visit at one week.
- No bath/pool/hot tub (putting the knee underwater) for 2 weeks.

### Exercises: Begin exercises immediately:

- Tighten and release your thigh and calf muscles (called Isometric exercises).
- CPM Machine: Most patients have a Continuous Passive Motion machine for 1-2 weeks.
  - Try to use it as much for a total of 8 hours per day (nighttime counts).
  - Start the settings at 45 degrees of flexion, then try to increase 10 degrees each day.
  - You can plan to stop using the CPM when your knee bends past 95 degrees.
  - Always have the speed at the slowest rate.

### Activities and Restrictions:

- You may put full weight on the surgical leg, just use crutches (or walker) for support
  - Usually crutches are needed only for 3-4 weeks after surgery
  - You can stop using crutches once your gait is normal (no limping allowed).
- You may get up to the bathroom or kitchen, but avoid being up too long (causes swelling).
- You'll be getting around your house well within a few days- Wait for a few weeks before being up for hours at a time.
- Driving: Only after you are SAFE, which means:
  - Off pain medications.
  - Able to control a vehicle safely- get foot from gas to brake and press hard.
  - This usually takes about 1-2 weeks, sometimes longer. Use your best judgment.

### Problems or Questions? Call us at 925.600.7020:

- Feel free to call us if you have any concerns, or if you have any:
  - Unrelenting pain, or increasing swelling or numbness, or high fever (above 101.5)
  - Continuous drainage or bleeding that is soaking your dressing
  - Chest pain, shortness of breath