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POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

ACL RECONSTRUCTION

DAY OF SURGERY:

1. For the first 24 hours following surgery, use your icing system as much as possible on your knee. This will help reduce the swelling and minimize the pain.
2. A knee immobilizer, or in some cases a knee brace, will be applied in the operating room. You must wear the immobilizer or brace when walking for the first few days after surgery, until your leg feels strong enough to walk without it. You must wear the immobilizer while sleeping for the first 2 days as well. If you are seeing a physical therapist they can help you decide when you no longer need the brace or immobilizer.
3. The day after surgery you should begin doing the exercises taught to you by the physical therapist before surgery.
4. Keep your leg elevated to decrease swelling, which will then in turn decrease your pain. When in bed, your leg should be straight with a pillow under the calf, NOT under the knee.
5. Prescriptions for pain medication and an anti-inflammatory will be given to you when you leave. We suggest you use the pain medication the first night prior to going to bed, in order to ease any pain when the nerve block wears off. You should avoid taking pain medications on an empty stomach as it will make you nauseous. Otherwise, use the pain medication ONLY as needed. Use the anti-inflammatory daily, as prescribed, to reduce the swelling after surgery.

DAY 1 AND UNTIL FIRST POST-OP VISIT:

1. The icing system will aid in decreasing pain and swelling. Ice your knee at least 4 times per day for the first few days. Then use it 2-3 times a day. You may use the ice more frequently if you are having continued pain and swelling.
2. You can remove the bandages 24 hours after surgery and apply Band-Aids to the wounds. Do not remove the white steri-strips tape over the lower incision. Re-apply clean Band-Aids daily over the top incisions, and a gauze pad over the lower incision daily. Do not put anything, including bacitracin or ointments, on or near the incisions. Use the elastic wrap for at least 3 days after surgery.
3. You may shower 48 hours after surgery but **Do Not** get the sutures wet. Wrap your knee with plastic wrap and secure it with tape around your thigh. You do not need to wear your immobilizer or brace in the shower. If your sutures do get wet, pat them dry and re-apply fresh Band-Aids.
4. Use the crutches while standing and walking for the first week.
5. Continue doing the exercises shown to you before surgery 2 times per day. Begin physical therapy 2-3 days after your surgery.
5. Do not drink alcoholic beverages or take illicit drugs when taking pain medications.
6. You may return to sedentary work/ school in the next couple of days when you feel up to it. You will need to keep you leg elevated as much as possible.
8. Call the office tomorrow with any questions, and make an appointment to have your sutures removed next week if an appointment was not given to you after surgery.

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

1. There may be some bleeding and fluid leaking from the incision site. This is normal after this type of surgery. This may continue for 24-36 hours. You may change and/or reinforce the bandages as needed. **Do Not** remove the white steri strip tapes covering the lower incision even if they are wet or bloody.
2. There will be MORE swelling on days 1-3 than there is on the day of surgery. This also is normal. The swelling will decrease with the anti-inflammatory medication, the icing and by keeping it elevated. The swelling will make it more difficult to bend your knee. As the swelling goes down your motion will become easier.
3. You may develop swelling and bruising that extends from your knee down to your calf and perhaps even to your foot over the next week. Do not be alarmed. This too is normal, and it is due to gravity.
4. There may be some numbness adjacent to the incision site. This may last for 6-12 months.
5. It is also normal to develop a low-grade fever after surgery (up to 100.5°). This can last 2 days after surgery. If you have any concerns just let us know.