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Instruction Sheet following ACL Reconstruction

Brace:

The knee brace given to you immediately after surgery must be worn while walking and sleeping in locked extension. You may take the brace off when doing exercises and/or the CPM machine. Brace hinges must be at the level of the kneecap. You may loosen or tighten the brace straps as necessary, but it should be snug. You will need to wear the brace for about 4 weeks.

Showering:

You may shower 48 hours after surgery, however you must place a plastic bag over the brace while showering or you have the option to take off the brace to shower. The wound needs to remain dry for the first two weeks. Whatever you decide to do please use CAUTION!! Be careful not to slip, twist, or fall. A stool placed in the shower so you can sit is a great idea so you can stabilize your knee. Do not soak in a bathtub, hot tub, or pool until the doctor tells you it is O.K. to do so. Once you are done showering pat the wound dry.

Dressing:

You should keep the dressing dry and in place under the brace until your first postoperative visit which is usually within the first week after surgery. This appointment should be made at the time you schedule surgery.

Elevation:

When you are not walking your leg should be straight with a pillow under your foot or ankle (not behind your knee). Try to elevate knee as much as possible to reduce swelling.

Ice:

You should use the Gameready/cryocuff or ice on the knee as often as possible (especially after exercising) to reduce swelling and discomfort. If using an ice pack, do not ice the knee more than 20 minutes at a time. Let the knee warm up before reapplication. Avoid getting your wound wet. If you have a Gameready/cryocuff you may keep this on the knee as instructed by the manufacture.

Crutches:

Use the crutches when walking as the physical therapist taught you in the hospital. Put as much weight on your leg as you can tolerate. When you feel comfortable walking without your crutches you may do so. This usually occurs at about 1-2 weeks.

Follow-up visit:

You need to see the doctor the first week following surgery for your first post-op visit. At that time your initial postoperative dressing will be removed. Physical therapy is normally started after your first post-op visit.

Common Concerns:

- 1 Numbness around the incision site on the outside part of the knee is a result of a disruption of a superficial nerve during the operative procedure. Most of this will resolve over time but a small area the size of a quarter usually remains numb. This is unavoidable because of the proximity of the nerve to the incision.
- 2 A sudden rush or feeling of fullness with pain when going from a sitting to a standing position in the knee is common after surgery.
- 3 Bruising and/or swelling of the shin and ankle are common after surgery. This usually occurs 3-4 days after surgery. This is caused by bleeding from the bone (which is cut during surgery) into the area just below the skin. To relieve this discomfort it is best to ice the leg. If at any time you have discomfort, swelling, or redness in the calf (behind the leg between the knee and the ankle) please call the doctor immediately.

Please call if:

- 1 If at any time you have discomfort, swelling, or redness in the calf (behind the leg between the knee and the ankle) please call the doctor immediately.
- 2 Any oozing or redness of the wound, fevers (>101.3 degrees F), or chills.
- 3 Any difficulty breathing or heaviness in the chest.

REMEMBER - these are only guidelines for what to expect following ACL surgery. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your knee please do not hesitate to call the office at any time.