

POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS ACL/KNEE LIGAMENT RECONSTRUCTION

MEDICATION

- One of three pain medications, Norco (hydrocodone), Tramadol or Tylenol #3 will be prescribed to you. Take as instructed and as needed.
 - Pain medication may cause constipation. You may take an over the counter stool softener (Colace, Senekot, etc) to help prevent this problem.
 - You should take these medicines with food or they may nauseate you.
 - You may not drive or operate heavy equipment while on narcotics
 - Pain medication is refilled on an individual basis and only during office hours.
- If you have a nerve block, **DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE BLOCK COMPLETELY WEARS OFF.**
 - Most patients find it helpful to take two pills 8-10 hours after surgery and scheduling two pills every four to six hours the first night and morning after and then gradually wean off as tolerated.
- Try to avoid anti-inflammatories such as Ibuprofen or Naprosyn for at least **six weeks** after surgery as this may impair tissue healing.
- Take one regular aspirin (325 mg) once a day for 14 days beginning the day after surgery unless you are allergic, have been prescribed another blood thinner or have a history of stomach ulcers.
- If prescribed Lovenox or Xarelto for prevention of blood clots, begin the day AFTER surgery and finish all injections or pills.
- **Resume all home medications unless otherwise instructed.**
- Call the office (713-486-7550) if you are having an adverse reaction to the medicine.

WOUND CARE

- Do not unwrap your dressings or remove your TED hose. This aids in swelling and helps in the prevention of blood clots and infection.
- Dressings will be changed on your first post-operative visit and a new dressing applied. If they get **EXCESSIVELY** wet prior to this, meaning “soaked through,” contact the office.
- Until your first post-op visit, wrap the leg, **WITH BRACE**, in a large plastic garbage bag with tape at both ends to shower or bathe.
 - Dr. Flores will instruct you when you may shower without the brace on.
- Continue to use the bag, plastic wrap or waterproof bandages to keep incisions dry for at least 2 weeks after surgery.
- NO submersion of wounds (bath, hot tub, pool) is recommended for a minimum of 3 weeks after surgery.

EXERCISE

- **Physical Therapy is a key component of recovery and should start within 1-3 days after surgery.** This appointment should be made **before surgery** to ensure you begin therapy on time. If you have difficulty doing this, contact the office for assistance.
- Regaining full extension quickly is critical to your recovery. **DO NOT** keep pillows under your knee leaving your knee in a bent position.
- A handout of exercises will be provided immediately after surgery that you may begin as soon as you are comfortable.

CRUTCHES

- You may place **FULL WEIGHT OR TOE TOUCH WEIGHT WITH YOUR CRUTCHES** on the involved leg depending on additional procedures that need to be performed when comfortable, unless instructed otherwise after surgery to help with balance and stability.
- Crutches will be needed until physical therapy and Dr. Flores deem them unnecessary based on strength in the involved leg and you can walk with a **normal gait**.

BRACE

- The post-operative brace, locked in full extension, is to be worn at all times except for when you are in the motion (CPM) machine or doing your exercises, including sleep.
- The brace is necessary for even the simplest tasks such as going to the restroom to protect your knee while your muscles are weak.
- The brace is generally allowed to bend after the first post-op visit and is used 4-6 weeks, depending on your procedure. Instructions may change with additional procedures.

CPM

- A motion machine may be available and prescribed depending on your insurance. Many patients find it assists in pain reduction and motion.
- Use without brace, 1-2 hours at a time, 2-3 times a day with a goal of 90 degrees.
- Start at 0-30 degrees and increase as tolerated up to 90 degrees unless instructed otherwise. Over aggressive use may result in an increase in pain and swelling.
- Do not sleep in machine or exceed 90 degrees of bending.

COLD THERAPY

- Ice should be used to assist in pain and swelling. Do not apply directly to exposed skin. Elevate your leg and try to ice 20-30 minutes every 3-4 hours if possible.
- A simple bag of frozen peas may be used as an inexpensive ice pack. Buy several bags of peas, place in a gallon size zip-lock bag making them about an inch thick and removing as much air as possible. Return to freezer, lying flat when done.

BRUISING

- The lower leg may become swollen and bruised, which is normal. This is from the fluid and blood moving down the leg and should resolve in 10-14 days.
- Elevate your leg above heart level to help assist in decreasing swelling.
- **If you experience severe calf pain or swelling, call the office immediately or go to the nearest emergency room.**

EMERGENCIES

- If you have an emergency contact Dr. Flores's office at 713-486-7550.
 - Uncontrolled nausea or vomiting, reaction to medication, inability to urinate, fever greater than 101.5 (low grade fevers 1-2 days after surgery is normal), severe pain not relieved by pain medication, redness or continued drainage around incisions (a small amount is normal), calf pain or severe swelling.
- **If you are having chest pain or difficulty breathing, call 911 or go to the closest emergency room.**

DENTAL WORK

- If you need dental work within six weeks after surgery, please contact the office for instructions.

FOLLOW UP APPOINTMENT

- Please make your first post-op visit 5-7 after surgery if not done so already.
- **If you have any questions, please call the office at 713-486-7550.**