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Johns Hopkins Fellowship Trained
Shoulder Surgery-Sports Medicine-Joint Replacement

ACL Reconstruction Post-op Instructions

Icing: Cryotherapy (icing an injury) has been shown to decrease pain, improve sleep and decrease the need for pain medications. There are many different methods for icing. These can be as simple as putting a bag of ice on the injured area to as complex as using state of the art cold therapy compression devices. If you elected to get a cold therapy device, please refer to the device handout for instructions on proper usage. Ice the knee for 20-30 minutes each hour as needed. This is especially important for the first 48 hours after surgery. Be sure to protect your skin by placing a T-Shirt or cloth between your skin and the cooling unit or icepack.



Warning: any type of cryotherapy can be cold enough to seriously injure the skin. When using cold therapy, inspect the skin at least every 10 minutes. Stop using cold therapy if you experience any adverse reactions, such as: increased pain, burning, blisters, increased redness, discoloration, welts, or skin changes.

Swelling: Keep your leg elevated as much as possible for the first few days after surgery.

Dressing Care: You will leave the hospital with a compressions stocking on your leg and a dressing covering your knee. Keep the dressing clean and dry.

Bearing Weight: After most arthroscopic surgeries, you can walk unassisted in your brace. You may use crutches, a cane, or a walker for a period of time after surgery if needed. You can gradually put more weight on your leg as your discomfort subsides and you regain strength in your knee as long as the brace is on.



Bathing/ Showering: Keep the incisions and dressing clean and dry until your follow up appointment.

Driving: It is illegal for you to drive if you have any disability or if you are taking narcotic pain medication. You may drive when your leg is pain free and you are not taking narcotic pain medications. This is usually after a week or two.

Medications: Generally you will be prescribed a narcotic pain medication to help relieve discomfort following surgery. Narcotic pain medications are constipating, so it is important that you eat a high fiber diet and drink plenty of water while you are taking them. You can not drive or operate any kind of machinery while taking pain medications. Do not drink alcohol while taking pain medications. It is important to take these medications as directed and only take them as necessary for pain.

Warning Signs: Call your orthopaedic surgeon immediately if you experience any of the following:

- Fever of 101.5° F or higher.
- Chills.
- Persistent warmth or redness around the shoulder.
- Persistent or increased pain.
- Significant swelling in your shoulder. Shortness of breath or chest pain
- Unusual bleeding (some surgical wound drainage is normal)
- Numbness or tingling of the arm or hand

Go to the Emergency Room immediately if you experience any CHEST PAIN or SHORTNESS OF BREATH, as these symptoms can be a sign of a life threatening condition.



Follow-up Appointment: You should have a follow-up appointment to see Dr. Grutter 10-14 days following surgery. If your follow-up appointment was not previously scheduled please call the office when you get home.