

POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS ACL RECONSTRUCTION

MEDICATION

- After surgery, you will be prescribed multiple medications for pain relief (percocet/oxycodone, celebrex/mobic, tylenol). Take medications as prescribed.
- Take one 81 mg aspirin twice daily 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 you normally take a blood thinner, resume that as prescribed by your primary care physician.
- **Resume all home medications unless otherwise instructed.**
- Call immediately to the office if you are having an adverse reaction to the medicine.

NERVE BLOCK

- Anesthesia will provide you with a nerve block prior to your surgery on the day of surgery to help with pain relief. This normally lasts 24-48 hours. Take your medications as prescribed so you will not be behind when your block wears off.

WOUND CARE

- Do not remove or unwrap your dressings. This is to help keep the wounds clean and decrease the chance of infection.
- Dressings will be changed on your first postoperative 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. Toole 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 allowed until a minimum of 3-4 weeks after surgery.

CRUTCHES

- You may place **FULL 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. Toole 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 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.

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.
- please visit **toolesportsmedicine.com** for rehab/physical therapy protocol. this can also be helpful if your therapist states he or she needs your protocol.

SLEEP

- Nighttime will probably be the most uncomfortable time.
- You should sleep in your post-op brace until your first post-op visit where you will get additional instructions depending on your progress.
- You may slightly loosen the straps to aid in sleeping if you feel they are tight.

COLD THERAPY

- Ice should be used for comfort and swelling. Use it at least 20 minutes at a time. Many patients use it an hour on then an hour off while awake for the first day or two.
- **Never apply directly to exposed skin. Place a dish-towel or t-shirt between your skin and the ice.**
- After the two days, use 20-30 minutes every 3-4 hours if possible.
- **If you have a cryotherapy machine, use as prescribed according to the instructions.**

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 and swelling, call the office immediately.**

EMERGENCIES

- If you have an emergency contact Dr. Toole's office.
- Contact the office if you notice any of the following:
 - 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.**

FOLLOW UP APPOINTMENT

- Please make your first post-op visit 7 days after surgery if not already scheduled.
- **If you have any questions, please call the office.**