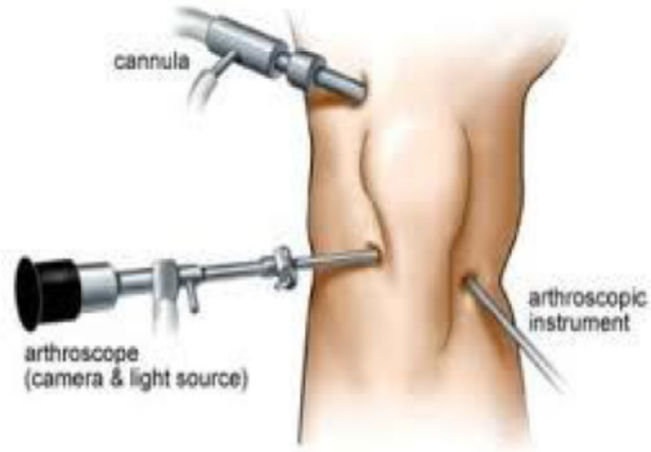
ACL Reconstruction

DR. EASTWOOD

Postoperative Instructions for ACL Reconstruction

You had a knee arthroscopy (scope) with ACL reconstruction. This surgical procedure uses small incisions to locate, identify and treat problems inside the knee. If you had a patella tendon graft you may be more sore in the front of the knee. If you had a hamstring graft you will have some soreness in the back of the knee. Your graft was used to recreate the ACL.

During surgery, sterile fluid, such as normal saline (a fluid containing sodium and chloride), is flushed through the knee joint. This causes the joint space to expand, allowing the doctor to see and freely work in the joint space. During surgery, some of the fluid is absorbed into surrounding tissue and may seep back out onto your dressing the first day after surgery. Due to the fluid used during surgery, your knee may be stiff and swollen after surgery.



Wound Care

- Keep dressing clean, dry and intact.
- Call your doctor if you have a fever over 100.4°F.
- Call your doctor if you notice pus or red streaks coming from the wound.
- Call your doctor if you notice increased redness or swelling around the wound.
- Call your doctor if you notice increasing bleeding from the wound.
- Your wound is covered with an ace wrap and gauze, which should remain in place for 48 hours.
- After 48 hours, you may remove the gauze and ace wrap. You may dab the wound with peroxide. Avoid ointments. Use adhesive bandages as a dressing. Keep the wound clean and dry.
- For showering, large waterproof adhesive bandages or OPSITE dressings available at most pharmacies work well to keep the wound clean and dry. After taking a shower, cover your incision with adhesive bandages and rewrap your knee with the ace wrap to help prevent swelling.
- Change the adhesive bandages daily or whenever they get dirty.
- It is normal to see some bloody drainage on the dressings after surgery due to the large amount of fluid used during the procedure. However, if you notice large amounts of bright red blood seeping out onto the dressing despite icing and elevation, please call your doctor.
- If the ace wrap becomes too tight, elevate your leg and apply ice. If the swelling does not go down or continues to increase, call your doctor's office.

If you have any problems or questions, please call your doctor's office (8am-5pm).

Answering service for after hours.

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Medications

- It is common to encounter more pain on the first or second day due to swelling. Your nerve block will have worn off by then as well.
- Using pain medication as directed will help to control the pain.
- It is important not to drink alcohol or drive while taking narcotic medications, such as Norco or Percocet.
- Do not take Tylenol while taking narcotics, such as Norco or Percocet, as these medications contain Tylenol.

Activity

- Icing is very important for the first 7 days after surgery.
- Ice should be applied for 20 minutes and then removed for 20 minutes.
- To help decrease swelling, which can cause pain, you should also elevate your leg as much as possible the first 72 hours after surgery.
- You will start physical therapy or start working with your ATC at your school or college as soon as possible. They will give you home exercises to complete.
- You will be allowed 50% weight bearing in your brace.
- Once you have stopped taking narcotic pain medications, driving is allowed if you did not have surgery on your right leg.
- Follow-up in office should be scheduled for 10-14 days post surgery.

Preventing Blood Clots

- Starting the day after surgery, take one baby aspirin (81mg) twice a day until the sutures are removed. Do not take aspirin if you have an allergy or are on a different blood thinner. If you have been prescribed a different blood thinner, start taking it the day after surgery.
- Walking around will help the blood circulate and prevent blood clots.
- While sitting or lying down, move your feet in a circle or pump your feet up and down 10-30 times an hour.
- If you notice redness, tenderness or swelling in your calf muscles, call your doctor right away.

Diet

- Pain medications can cause constipation.
- To help prevent constipation, you can try a high-fiber diet with lots of fluids.

Weight Bearing

- 50% weight bearing in the brace is advised unless otherwise instructed.
- Crutches will be used to assist with balance and walking for 2 weeks.

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