

## Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL) Reconstruction with Autograft or Allograft

Following a “scope” (arthroscopy) of the knee with reconstruction of the anterior cruciate ligament you will have a compressive surgery bandage wrapped from your toes to your thigh, along with an ice pack/cold pad on your knee, and you will be wearing a knee brace or knee immobilizer.

You may notice the antiseptic that is applied to your skin for surgery, it may be orange or blue in color, it will eventually wash off

After the procedure, surgical bandages will be in place, there will be a cold pad on your knee and you will have a device to keep the leg straight, either a knee immobilizer or a long knee brace. Both devices are designed to keep your leg resting in a straight line

You must wear the immobilizer/brace until your Doctor/Surgeon tells you it is OK to move around without the device; this will be determined at your first office visit after surgery

The immobilizer/brace must be on when you are up and moving around; it must be snug so that it does not slide down your leg when you are standing up. You must also sleep with the immobilizer/brace on your leg at night

You will be working on your own self-guided physical therapy program before you see your Doctor/Surgeon in the office. The Physical Therapist at the surgery facility will instruct you in these exercises and teach you how to use crutches for support after the procedure

When resting at home, it is important to work on these exercises to gain good motion of your knee. Your goal for motion is to gain full flexion (bending) to 90 degrees and full extension (being out straight) by your first office visit. You will begin a formal physical therapy program after the first post-operative visit to your Doctor/Surgeon

Also, when you are resting with your leg extended out straight, place a pillow under the lower part of the leg (the calf area); doing this allows your leg to rest in full extension

**Do not engage in any sports or exercise programs without permission of your Doctor/Surgeon**

Once the surgery bandages are removed, you may wear your immobilizer/brace either next to your skin or over your clothing, whichever is more comfortable to you

Following a “scope” (arthroscopy) with reconstruction of the anterior cruciate ligament you will usually be **Weight Bearing as Tolerated**. Move around as much as you are comfortable, placing as much weight on the leg as you can stand. Sometimes **Partial Weight Bearing** is ordered. Move around as much as you are comfortable placing some, but never all, weight on the leg, You are encouraged to vary your activities; walk for a while, sit for a while, rest in bed for a while, etc.

**It is important that you follow your Doctor/Surgeon's directions about activity and Weight bearing after your procedure.**

Two days after surgery you may remove all of the surgery bandages; remove the ace wraps, all white gauze wrappings around your knee and the smaller bandages on the incision(s); you may see some dried drainage form your surgery incisions on the bandages, we expect a little drainage; throw all the bandages away, do not save them to reuse on your knee

You may wash up in the shower with clean soap and water; you may wash lightly over the surgery incision with clean soap and water; it is a good idea to use a clean disposable washcloth each time you wash; towel dry the area; air dry the area and then you may apply band-aids to cover the incision

Do not apply any lotions or ointments over your incision, near the surgery area or anywhere on your surgery leg; your Doctor/Surgeon will tell you when you may lotion around this area

You may have a cooler type of ice machine prescribed for you after surgery, an ice sleeve, an ice pack, or simply a bag of ice cubes; any cold therapy is helpful to control pain and swelling of the surgery area

Icing is best used every 2 hours, for 20 minutes at a time. If you are using a cooler, you may continuously ice your knee while sitting or resting.

Ice packs may be used over the surgery bandage; the cold will penetrate the layers of bandages and help with pain management

Be careful to protect your skin from any of the cold therapy methods; immediately after surgery, the bandages will protect your skin; once the bandages are removed, you may continue to use the cold therapy, but you must protect your skin from the cold, for instance, with a small towel; skin which is unprotected from the cold therapy is at risk for frost bite

Swelling of the operative leg/area; Some individuals experience swelling of the operative leg/area. This is very individualized; some patients experience more swelling, some less. If you are experiencing swelling such that you are very uncomfortable, go lay down in bed and elevate your surgery leg on pillows and apply your ice pack. Elevating the surgery area above the level of your heart with help to decrease the swelling and the ice helps with pain control. While resting continue to so the exercise called “ankle pumps” which helps to increase circulation to the surgery leg and thus decrease swelling. Continue the exercises that you were shown at the hospital throughout the day until you start a formalized therapy program. It is important to work on full straightening of the knee as well as bending during the first days after surgery.