

ACL Reconstruction Postoperative Instructions

Michael S Bahk, MD

Diet

1. You may resume your regular diet. However, start slow with clear liquids and gradually work your way back to your normal diet. This will help prevent nausea and vomiting.

Knee Care & Bathing

2. Use your crutches and you can put weight on your leg as tolerated as long as your knee is straight with the brace or knee immobilizer. You should wear your knee brace or immobilizer all the time until cleared by Dr. Bahk.
3. If you have had a meniscal repair, it is important to **NOT** bend your knee past 90 degrees.
4. You must wear your white TED hose compressive stocking until cleared by Dr. Bahk. This stocking reduces swelling which improves healing and helps prevent blood clots.
5. You can change your dressing 2 days after surgery or you may leave them on until you see Dr. Bahk in clinic. If you decide to change them, replace them with sterile gauze and gentle skin friendly tape once a day from a local pharmacy.
6. It is ok to shower or sponge bathe 2 days after surgery but you must keep your knee clean and dry at all cost! This usually entails keeping your leg outside the shower, using saran wrap or a large plastic bag to protect your wounds.
7. At your first clinic visit Dr Bahk will tell you when you can shower normally.

Knee Range of Motion

8. Your first goal after ACL surgery is to get your straightness back. You will actually feel more comfortable with the knee slightly bent but it is important to start working on extending your knee immediately. This entails placing a firm but padded cushion/pillow/pad beneath your heel to straighten out the knee. Do this at least three times a day.

Cold Therapy

9. A cold therapy unit is optional; it helps reduce pain and swelling. You may use it for 30 minutes at a time every hour if desired. **Very important!** However, you must protect your skin from direct contact with the cold therapy pad at all times with an in-between layer of dressing or cloth. Your skin can get freezer burn if the cold pad touches the skin directly for extended time! Protect your skin at all times!

Pain Medication

10. Take your pain medication as prescribed. This usually means 1 tablet every for 4 hours for mild pain or 2 tablets every 4-6 hours for severe pain. You may want to take it regularly for the first 48 hours after surgery. Do not take any additional Tylenol.

11. No driving while taking any narcotic pain medication!
12. The pain medication may cause some nausea so take it with some food.
13. The pain medication may also cause constipation so if you take it regularly, take a stool softener, fiber bar, Metamucil or prune juice to prevent constipation.

Follow-up Care

14. Watch for temperature > 101.5°F, persistent numbness and tingling in the foot, persistent bleeding or drainage from the wound, foul odor, progressively worsening pain unresponsive to pain medication, blue toes, chest pain or difficulty breathing. If you have any of these symptoms, call the office if during normal business hours or go to the nearest emergency room!
15. If you do not have a postoperative appointment set-up already, please call the office to schedule an appointment for 7-10 days after surgery at (805) 578-8550 x 6879 or through the appointment desk at (818) 901-6600.