

AFTER YOUR ACL RECONSTRUCTION



Mark Clatworthy, Orthopaedic Surgeon, Knee Specialist

IN THE FIRST 24 HOURS YOU MUST NOT:

Drive a car, operate machinery, drink alcohol, make important decisions or sign important documents.

ACTIVITY

Elevate your leg above your chest for 48 hours after surgery. Your ankle must be higher than your knee

Do not place a pillow under your knee.

Use crutches to assist walking. Put as much weight through the leg as pain will allow.

You can discontinue using the crutches once you have full control of your muscles around the knee and it is comfortable to walk. Your physiotherapist will decide when you are ready. This usually takes 7-10 days

Don't engage in activities which increase knee pain or swelling such as stair climbing, prolonged sitting or standing. You can overdo it so let pain and swelling be your indicators. If your knee swells rest, elevate and ice it.

You may return to sedentary work 2 weeks after surgery if your pain is tolerable. If you have a more active job you may require at least 6 weeks until you can return to light duties. You can not return to contact sport for 9 months

CRYOCUFF: You have been given a special cooling sleeve which reduces knee pain and swelling. These are very expensive and you are very lucky to have it. You must bring it back with you at your two week visit otherwise you will be charged for it - \$300. An instruction sheet is given to you at the time which explains how to use it.

EXERCISES:

An ACL rehabilitation protocol will be given to you before your surgery.

You must take this to your physiotherapist. **Make an appointment to see a physiotherapist for the week following your surgery.** You will be seen by a

physiotherapist in hospital before you go home who will give you instructions for the first week

WOUND CARE:

You have a Tibigrip dressing which you can pull on and off like a sock. Pull it down if your knee feels tight or the foot or ankle swells. The tubigrip dressing should stay on for two weeks. If the underlying plastic dressings are heavily blood stained get your GP's practice nurse to change it.

You can take the tubigrip dressing off to have a shower . Pull it back on afterwards

MEDICATIONS:

Take two panadol tablets every six hours for five days. If the pain is not controlled take up to one Tramadol tablets every ftwelve hours. Take a Voltaren tablet in the morning with food for five days.

Local anaesthetic has been placed in your knee. This will typically wear off 6-8 hours after the surgery so you can expect pain to increase after this. **Thus you must take your tablets**

If you are in severe pain the night of the surgery you can be admitted to hospital.

Please call me on my cell phone 021 433 335.

CALL MARK IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWNG OCCUR:

Increased numbness, unrelenting pain, fever or chills, redness around the incisions, continuous drainage or bleeding from the wounds (a small to moderate amount of bleeding is expected), difficulty breathing or calf pain.

It is normal for your knee to be painful, swollen and bruised for at least 4 weeks. The bruising may move extensively up and down your leg. If you have had a hamstring graft it is common to be sore in your inner thigh and /or feel a snapping sensation in your inner thigh two to six weeks after surgery. This is scar tissue releasing and is nothing to worry about. You will feel numbness around the scars. If you have a patella tendon graft you may have pain in the front of your knee. This will settle with time.

POST-OP VISITS:

I see you two weeks, six weeks, three six and nine months after your surgery.