

Anterior Cruciate Ligament Reconstruction

Home Care Instructions

The anterior cruciate ligament prevents your tibia from sliding and rotating forward on your femur; it is "crucial" for pivoting athletes. ACL surgery is fairly routine, and the vast majority of people get back to baseline in terms of return to sports. Getting back to the field may take 9 months, and rehab will be critically important.

-Dr. Michael Russonella

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| Procedure | The surgery involves pumping fluid into the knee under high pressure (100mm Hg). Thus, swelling for several days is common. The swelling may extend into the leg and foot. If you develop significant swelling in the lower leg/foot (not just the knee) AFTER 2-3 days contact our office and an ultrasound will be scheduled to check for blood clots in the leg veins. |
| Diet | You can return to your normal diet as tolerated. |
| Activity | Use the brace always EXCEPT showers. Don't plan any other strenuous activities until you have been cleared to do so by Dr. Russonella. You can walk with FULL WEIGHT on leg BUT ONLY with the brace locked in full extension. You may begin to move your knee when you are comfortable; you can move to your tolerance. DO NOT bend your knee while weight bearing until cleared by Dr. Russonella. Crutches may be given these are used as needed, they are not a requirement. Most patients use crutches for the first couple of days post-op. |
| Pain Medication | Anesthesia may have given you a nerve block; this will help with pain. They will provide instructions as to the block. All medication is sent electronically to your pharmacy. An antibiotic (which you are required to take to prevent risk of infection) and a narcotic (if you are not comfortable taking the pain medication you may take Tylenol ONLY 1-2 tablets every 4-6 hours as needed for pain.) You may come off the prescription pain medication when you feel comfortable. Resume other home medication as per usual regimen. With the PRP injections DO NOT take any anti-inflammatories, this will disrupt the healing process the PRP is promoting. The pain medication may cause constipation; drink plenty of fluids, apple juice and prune juice as needed. You can also use Colace 100mg by mouth twice a day. If you do not have a bowel movement within 5 days drink ½ bottle of magnesium citrate, which is sold over the counter at any pharmacy. Post-op day #1 2000mg Vitamin C daily until wounds are fully healed. |
| Wound Care and Showering | There may be areas of black and blue due to the arthroscopic fluid mixing with small amounts of blood. This is normal. The knee will have a large dressing over 2-3 small incisions. Leave the dressing on for 72 hours. You will be able to shower after the dressing is removed; DO NOT lather with soap, clean around the incision to prevent infection. Apply band-aids over the incisions after they are dry. DO NOT apply any creams or salves to your incision; this can cause complications. |
| Return Visits | The office will call you to schedule your post-operative appointments. |
| Emergency | Notify the office if you develop a fever >101°F, with unusual increase in pain, redness, and warmth. Report any pus or unusual drainage to our office immediately. It could be a concern if your incisions swell or have drainage. If you encounter any problems, please call our office. |
- ** If you feel chest pain or shortness of breath, please go to the nearest ER for evaluation. Do not call the office or wait for an appointment; although extremely rare, this could be a blood clot in the lungs. ****