
ACL Reconstruction Patient Discharge Instructions

The following is an outline of instructions and information for post-operative arthroscopic ACL reconstruction. Please follow these instructions specifically and if you have any questions, contact Dr. Bales.

The Arthroscopic Procedure Done on Your Knee Today

1. eg. ACL Reconstruction Using Achilles Tendon Allograft
2. _____
3. _____

Pain and Swelling

It is normal to have pain and swelling in your knee after surgery. The swelling may last two to three weeks and the pain is variable. Acute pain is usually relieved after the first three to seven days after surgery. It is normal to see some bruising up to your thigh or down to your calf and ankle. Take your oral pain medication as directed for pain. If a block has been administered by the anesthesiologist, please follow appropriate instructions. If you have severe pain and swelling or redness in your calf that persists, you should contact Dr. Bales.

How to Minimize Swelling

1. Make certain your bandage is not too tight. If it is, you may loosen it.
2. You may place a bag of ice over your knee for the first 7 to 10 days (usually 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off). Do this at least every two hours for the first three to four days. Do not place the ice bag directly on the skin, make certain there is a towel or bandage between the ice bag and your knee.
3. Elevate your leg so it is above the level of your heart (i.e. if you are sitting, prop your ankle up on several pillows).

Dressing Care

Keep your dressing clean and dry. There may be some bloody spotting on the dressing initially, this is normal. Excessive bleeding that soaks the dressing must be reported to Dr. Bales. The dressing can be changed on the second day after surgery. Leave the paper strips that cover the incisions. Place a clean dressing (you can get 4x4 bandages from your pharmacy) and hold it in place with an ace bandage (wrap the ace starting at your calf going towards your knee). If the wounds are dry you can just cover the knee with the Ace™ bandage. You can stop wearing the TED hose one week after surgery, if you are mobile.

Do not place ointments such as Neosporin, etc. onto wounds.

Bathing

Keep the incisions dry at all times. You may shower starting on post-operative day three. Do not soak in water such as a bathtub, hot tub or swimming pool for three weeks.

Activity/Weight Bearing

- Left Leg Right Leg
 Toe touch weight bearing (5 lbs.)
 Full weight bearing as tolerated
 With crutches and hinged knee brace in place (initially the brace will be locked in extension)

Ankle and foot pumps should be started immediately and will help decrease swelling and minimize the risk of blood clot formation. You will start formal physical therapy three to four days after surgery.

Diet

Clear liquids and advance as tolerated.

Driving

Do not drive unless cleared by Dr. Bales. You must be able to comfortably use the brake and gas pedal and be off all pain medication before you can be cleared to drive. If surgery was on your right knee, you will not be able to drive typically for four weeks.

Medications

- Pain: Norco - 7.5/325, one to two every four to six hours as needed
 Ibuprophen (Advil) - 200 mg, three tablets three to four times per day as needed
- Other: ASA - 325 mg, once per day for four weeks
 Phenergan - 25 mg, once every six to eight hours as needed for nausea

Do not put any ointments on incision sites; waterproof bandages only.

Warnings

Notify Dr. Bales immediately if any of the following occur:

- Excessive bleeding
- Excessive non-bloody wound drainage beyond the first three to four days
- Poor pain control
- Fever greater than 101.5 degrees Fahrenheit after post-operative day three
- Increased redness along incision
- Calf pain or swelling

Follow-up with Dr. Bales

- As scheduled _____ day(s) _____ week(s)

Please call **317.268.3601** to schedule your post-op appointment if not already scheduled or if you have any questions or concerns. After 5 p.m. or on the weekend, call **866.404.5070** to contact the on call doctor.

ACL Reconstruction Home Exercise Program

These exercises are to be performed **every day for the first two weeks** after your ACL Reconstruction in conjunction with physical therapy.

1. Keep your brace on at all times after your surgery
2. Keep your brace locked in full extension (knee straight) at all times except when in your CPM or when doing other knee range of motion exercises or sitting in a car or chair.
3. **Do Straight Leg Raises:** Lift your leg about 24 inches off the ground and hold it for 10 seconds. Do a minimum of three sets of 10 repetitions. Make sure you do this with your brace locked in full extension.
4. **Do Quad Sets:** With this exercise, you tighten your thigh muscles and hold it for five seconds. Do a minimum of 3 sets of 10 repetitions. When you tighten your thigh muscles, it will feel like your knee is being pushed into the ground. Make sure you do this with your brace locked in full extension.
5. **Move your kneecap (patella) side to side.** Move the kneecap toward the inner side of your leg and hold it for five seconds, then move it toward the outer side of your leg and hold it for five seconds. Do three sets of 10 repetitions in each direction.
6. **Heel slides:** Sitting up and your brace unlocked, slide your heel toward your buttock. This may be assisted by using a towel to pull your foot.
7. **Prone Hangs:** Lay on your stomach with your knee off the end of your bed or table and let your leg hang free. Keep this position for five to ten minutes if you can tolerate it.
8. **Bridging Exercise:** Roll a towel and put it under your heel with nothing under your knee. Keep this position for five to ten minutes. You may assist this by resting your hand on your thigh, near the knee.
9. **Calf Pumps:** Move your ankles, both legs, up and down, at least 10 times an hour until you are up and around regularly to encourage blood flow in the calves and reduce the risk of DVT (blood clot).