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Post-Operative Instructions: ACL Reconstruction

Pain Medication:

Most of our patients are prescribed a short supply of an opioid narcotic pain medication to help ease their pain post-surgery. This medication, if prescribed, has been sent to your preferred pharmacy. The pain is usually the worst the first few days, and usually, by the 3rd day, the pain eases up significantly. It is very important that you only take the opioid pain medication prescribed to you as directed, and only if needed. Besides addiction, one of the side effects of opioid narcotic medications is constipation. We recommend that you take a stool softener when taking this medication. Should you not need to take the opioid pain medication, our recommended medication for pain relief is Tylenol. It is recommended that you consult with your Primary Care Physician prior to taking any medications to ensure the medications are safe for you to take.

Elevation and Ice:

It is EXTREMELY important to keep your leg elevated above the level of your heart as much as possible to help reduce pain and swelling. You can furthermore ice the area over top of your surgical dressing for up to 20 minutes at a time, multiple times per day. It's possible you might not feel much of the cold go through the bandages, however. Let your kneecap area warm up before reapplication. Keep your dressing dry.

Knee Brace, Surgical Dressing, and Showering:

Your dressing should stay on for about 48 hrs, after which they can be removed and a quick shower is allowable. After drying place bandaids over the area of the small cuts. Otherwise, try to keep the knee dry, including minimizing sweating as that increases the risk of infection.

Your brace should be on and locked in full extension any time you are attempting to ambulate. If you are having difficulty maneuvering with bathing or showering, you may take a sponge bath with mild soap, water and a soft sponge or washcloth instead.

Weightbearing and Crutches

Whether you can bear weight on your leg depends on the procedure performed. Please check with Dr. Lee's team as to specific instructions for this. Often, the use of crutches or a cane is helpful to ensure stability.

Nausea:

It is common to get nausea after surgery usually from the result of your anesthesia. Start with drinking fluids such as Ginger Ale, then if tolerated, progress with a light soup and simple foods

such as bread. Then if tolerated, you can resume a normal diet. Prolonged use of narcotic medications can also increase nausea symptoms.

CPM

We typically recommend starting range of motion movement of the knee shortly after surgery. We will typically arrange for a representative to set up a CPM machine to help you move your knee in an automated fashion. Start with 0-40 degrees, and try to increase by 10 degrees a day until you reach 90 degrees, after which you can return the device to the company. This should be done for a total of 4 hours a day, and can be broken up into whatever time frame that suits your schedule.

First Post-Operative Appointment:

Your first post-operative appointment should be scheduled for 7-10 days after your surgery. Call our office to schedule your appointment if you haven't already done so.

Physical Therapy:

We will further discuss the details and scheduling of your Physical Therapy with you at your first post-operative appointment. We have a list of recommended Physical Therapists that will be provided to you at that time.

Driving:

Driving is something that is based purely on your ability to safely drive your car. In general, it is better to be safe than sorry, and only drive when you think you can be in complete control of your vehicle. You should furthermore never drive while taking the pain medication prescribed to you.

Common Concerns:

- Bruising and/or swelling of the affected limb will continue to develop and may change colors (Blue to green to yellow) as time goes on. Gravity can pull the bruising and swelling downward into the toes. Elevation and icing is the best way to alleviate this bruising and swelling.
- Numbness or tingling of the affected limb after surgery is common. This can be secondary to the effects of the nerve block and irritation of nerves due to swelling.
- A sudden rush or feeling of fullness with pain when going from sitting to standing of the affected limb is common after surgery.

Speaking to Dr. Lee after surgery:

Dr. Lee or someone from his team will reach out to you by phone after surgery. Please call 212-737-3301 and request to have Dr. Lee paged if you do not hear from Dr. Lee by 9:00 PM or miss his call.

Patient Portal:

A great option for contacting our team is through the NY Orthopedics Patient Portal. If you haven't already registered, you may do so by heading to <https://www.newyorkorthopedics.com> and clicking on "Patient Portal Log In" in the upper right hand corner of the screen. You should then click the link "Sign up today" and follow the instructions to create your account.

Call the office IMMEDIATELY for:

- Fever (>101.5°F) or chills
- Oozing or increasing redness of the wound
- Severe, unbearable pain, that is not reduced with pain medication

Report to the nearest Emergency Room Immediately for:

- Difficulty breathing or heaviness/pain in the chest
- Symptoms of an allergic reaction such as a rash, swelling in places not operated on.

***REMEMBER - these are only guidelines for what to expect following surgery. If you have any additional questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call the office or send a message through the Patient Portal.**