



ACL Reconstruction

Post-Operative Instructions

Medications

- **Aspirin:** This medication is to help prevent blood clots after surgery. Take as directed for 30 days following surgery. You can begin taking the Aspirin the morning after your surgery.
- **Hydrocodone/Acetaminophen (Norco):** This is a narcotic medication for pain. This medication is to be taken AS NEEDED. Plan to stay on a scheduled dose of 1-2 tablets every 4-6 hrs for the first 1-2 days. After 2-3 days you should be able to space out or discontinue the medication and transition to Acetaminophen (Tylenol). DO NOT exceed 4,000 mg of Acetaminophen in a 24-hour period. Do not drive, drink alcohol, or take Acetaminophen (Tylenol) WHILE taking this medication.
- **Zofran:** Anti Nausea medication to be taken as needed.

All medications will be sent to your verified preferred pharmacy prior to your surgery. As discussed, we highly recommend picking up your medications prior to surgery day to mitigate unnecessary stress for you on surgery day and allow for the opportunity to troubleshoot any issues with obtaining the medications.

Please note: the medications above may vary slightly based off your current medication list. These variations will be discussed during your pre-operative phone consultation with a PA.

Weight Bearing

- You are allowed to be **FULLY WEIGHT BEARING** as tolerated by pain immediately after surgery.
- Advance weight bearing status as tolerated by pain under the direction of your physical therapist.



Wound Care: Dressing

Wound Care: Showering

Brace

- Leave the bulky outer dressing directly over the incisions on until 48 hours after surgery. At that point, you can remove the bulky dressing and leave the steri-strips (white rectangular Band-aids) that have been placed directly over the incisions in place until your initial follow-up visit with Dr. Chahla's office. You do not need to cover the steri-strips unless you would prefer to. If you do choose to cover them, simply use a Band-aid to do so.
- **Do not remove the Steri-Strips.** Please leave these in place until your follow up visit with Dr. Chahla's office.
- It is normal to see some blood-tinged or clear drainage on the dressing from the incision. If you notice a thick, pus-like yellow discharge, please email the practice a photo of your incision at chahlapractice@rushortho.com
- **Do not apply lotions or ointments** of any kind (including Neosporin) to the incision site.

- **Do not shower for 48 hours after surgery.**
- After 48 hours from your surgery, you can cover the incisions with a waterproof bandage/covering and shower.
- After your sutures are removed at your initial post-operative visit with Dr. Chahla's team, you can shower without a waterproof bandage covering the incisions. When showering, simply let the soapy water run over the incisions. **Do not scrub the incisions.**
- Pat the incisions dry when finished showering. **Do not apply lotions or ointments** until after the sutures have been removed and the incisions are fully healed (typically around 4-6 weeks after your surgery).
- **DO NOT soak or submerge the incision** in a bath/pool until after the sutures have been removed and the incisions are fully healed (typically around 4-6 weeks after your surgery).

- You will use the brace until you have restored quadriceps activation and full extension of the knee.
- Use the brace locked straight (in extension) while:
 - Sleeping
 - Ambulating with the use of crutches/walker for assistance as needed.

If you have any issues or questions regarding the brace, please call our [DME department directly at: 312.432.2482](tel:312.432.2482)



Icing

- We strongly recommend icing as much as possible for the first 2-3 weeks following surgery to better manage both pain and swelling.
- Icing Options:
 - Ice/Cold Pack: Cycle 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off per hour throughout the day.
 - Cold Therapy Unit: Can be purchased through our DME department located at any of our clinic locations or via phone at 312.432.2482.
 - If you choose to purchase this unit, please use as directed as often as possible.
 - Please be sure to always have a layer between the ice pad and your skin and perform regular skin checks to ensure that the cold is not causing injury to your skin.
 - If you purchase a machine with the option for compression, you can begin use of the compression setting starting the day after your surgery as tolerated by pain.

Physical Therapy

- You will begin physical therapy **1-2 days** following your surgery.
- Please call your physical therapist as soon as possible to schedule your initial appointment. We recommend calling before your surgery to schedule your initial post-op PT appointment.
- On the day of your first post-op PT visit: **Please bring the physical therapy order and protocol** provided to you in the post-operative folder on the day of surgery.

General Activity

- Alternate sitting, reclining, lying down as tolerated.
- Perform ankle pumps continuously throughout the day to reduce risk of developing a blood clot.
- We recommend you get up and move at least once every 30-45 minutes to prevent stiffness and muscle atrophy.
- When using crutches, you can go up and down stairs. Please see crutch training video sent to your email through Patient IQ or consult with your PT for further instructions and guidance.

Range of Motion

- **Do NOT** lose extension (ability to straighten knee). Elevate the leg with a pillow under the foot/ankle only. **Do NOT** place a pillow or bump under the knee.
- **Goal:** 0-90° by 2 weeks post-op. Complete daily PT exercises 3-4 times per day. This is very important to your recovery.



Driving

Follow-Up

When to contact the office

- You will be allowed to drive once you are:
 - No longer using the crutches/walker.
 - No longer using narcotic medications to manage pain.
 - Feel comfortable in your abilities to come to an emergency stop if needed.
- **Initial Post-Op Visit:** 1-2 days post-op.
- **Expected Additional Follow-up Visits:** 2 weeks post-op (sutures removed at this visit), 6 weeks post-op, 3 months post-op, 4.5 months post-op, 6 months post-op, 9 months post-op.
- Please note that it is normal to experience mild temperature fluctuations after surgery. However, please contact our office if you begin to experience a fever **>100.4° F**.
- If you develop chills or continued night sweats.
- If you notice pus, significant pain, or redness surrounding the incision site. Please email the practice a photo of your incision at chahlapractice@rushortho.com
- If you experience constant cramping, tightness, pain, or a persistent Charlie-horse sensation in the calf of the operative leg.
- If you are unable to urinate for greater than 1-2 days after surgery.