



**POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS:  
PROCEDURE: ARTHROSCOPY WITH ANTERIOR CRUCIATE LIGAMENT  
RECONSTRUCTION, POSSIBLE MENISCUS REPAIR**

- **Pain Medication:** You will be given a prescription for pain medication to be taken after surgery. This should be filled and ready for use when you return home from surgery. You should not drive, operate heavy machinery or participate in activities that require concentration while taking narcotic pain medications such as Percocet, Oxycodone, Norco, Vicodin or Tylenol with Codeine. You should take an over the counter stool softener while taking narcotic pain medications to prevent constipation.
- **Dressings:** You may leave the dressing intact until you return for your post-operative visit. If dressing becomes uncomfortable, you may remove it no earlier than 3 days after surgery and apply Band-Aids over the arthroscopic sutures and dry/sterile gauze over the larger incision. (For example, if surgery was on Thursday, do not change the dressing until Sunday.) Keep incision dry and clean until sutures are removed at your first post-op visit. Do not get the incisions wet until you have been seen by your surgeon and given approval for showering. You will not be able to soak the incision in a bath, pool, or body of water for 4 weeks. When doing a dressing change, **DO NOT** remove the steri-strips (small ½ inch adhesive strips over incisions) if present. These will gradually fall off over time or be removed/replaced at your post-op visit.
- **Knee Brace/Immobilizer:** Take off for towel roll exercises (see below) and showers ONLY. Keep on at other times and **LOCKED IN FULL EXTENSION**.
- **Cold Therapy Machine:** If provided, begin use the day after surgery. Use it three times a day at the manufacturer's setting for one hour each session. Always make sure to apply a barrier between the cold pad and your skin. If you have not been provided with a cold therapy machine, apply ice to surgical area in a waterproof bag for 30 minutes each hour you are awake.
- **Post-Operative Appointment:** Please make a post-operative appointment to see your surgeon 10-14 days following surgery. The surgical scheduler should arrange this.
- **Prescription Refill Protocol:** You **MUST** give your physician **48 hours** notice for any medication refill. Many medications require a written prescription and cannot be called into a pharmacy. Prescriptions **will not** be filled over the weekend.

- Towel Roll Exercises: Do towel exercises for extension as shown below starting on post-op day #1.
- Place the heel on a rolled towel making sure the heel is propped high enough to lift the thigh off the table.
  - Allow the leg to relax into extension.
  - 3 - 4 times a day for 10 - 15 minutes at a time. See Figure 1 below.



Figure 1. Heel prop using a rolled towel.

- Activity & Crutches: Use crutches for assistance at all times. Start immediate full weight bearing with knee brace locked in extension as tolerated with crutches for assistance. Do not engage in prolonged periods of standing or walking over the first 7-10 days following surgery. Elevate the operative leg to chest level whenever possible to decrease swelling. The brace should be used for ambulation and sleeping, but may be taken off to perform exercises described in the rehabilitation protocol.
- DVT (blood clot) prevention:
1. Perform range of motion exercises for right and left ankle to exercise calf muscles. Do ten reps every hour minimum while awake
  2. When upright, place surgical foot on ground and apply body weight for balance. Do not have leg suspended in air when walking with crutches.
  3. Beginning the day of surgery, take one regular (325mg) aspirin daily for 2 weeks unless not recommended for other medical reasons. ***Clear this with your family doctor before starting the aspirin.***
  4. You should not do any flying for two weeks following surgery
- When to call your surgeon:
- Complications after surgery are fortunately very rare. Call the office if you have any of the following symptoms:
    - Persistent fever >101, chills
    - Increasing pain at the surgical site
    - Increased swelling/pain in the calf
    - New onset numbness or tingling
    - Hives or new rashes
    - Shortness of breath or chest pain
    - Persistent nausea/vomiting
    - Drainage from your incision lasting >5 days