

# **ACL RECONSTRUCTION - POST OPERATIVE INSTRUCTION SHEET**

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## **Dressings**

Your wounds will be usually closed with dissolving stitches and “steri-strips” (adhesive tape) or less commonly removable stitches. They will be covered by a small inner dressing and then by a larger outer dressing consisting of padding and a compression bandage. You may remove the outer dressing after 3-4 days but please keep the inner dressings on the wounds dry and intact until your first post-operative visit. You will need to protect these inner dressings when showering (for example, with a plastic bag tied around your knee).

## **Pain**

The level of pain after your surgery should be at the level of a moderate ache. You will be given a script for pain medication by the anaesthetist - please take this as instructed. If your pain is not controlled by this medication, please call the rooms on 9984 7001 (or Emergency Department of your local hospital if after hours).

## **Things To Watch Out For**

ACL reconstruction has a low complication rate but very occasionally swelling, infection and blood clots (deep vein thrombosis) can occur. Please seek medical care if you experience a sudden increase in pain (both in the calf and knee), shortness of breath, swelling, redness, fevers or discharge from the wound. During business hours please call the rooms on 9984 7001 and after hours please call the Emergency Department of your local public hospital.

## **Physical Activity After Your ACL Reconstruction**

### **1. Walking And Daily Activities**

Most patients will walk out of hospital after their ACL reconstruction with or without any crutches. You may weight bear on the operated leg as much as your pain tolerates (unless you have had a meniscal repair as well). Before your first post-operative visit, please try to avoid prolonged periods of standing, walking or sitting with a bent knee (e.g. long car trips). Otherwise try to go about your activities of daily living as your pain tolerates.

### **2. Swelling Control**

The swelling in your knee will take at least several days to begin to settle. Icing your knee (20 minutes every 3-4 hours) and elevating your leg above the level of your heart can help with this.

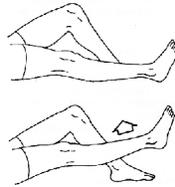
### **3. Driving**

Please do not drive before your first post-operative appointment.

#### 4. Exercises

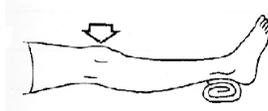
Before your first post-operative visit, you should perform some simple exercises everyday which are aimed at maintaining your muscle strength and knee range of motion. Please as many sets (up to 5) of 10 repetitions as your pain and swelling tolerates.

##### a) Straight Leg Raises



Lie on your back with your other knee bent. Keeping your leg straight and toes pointed to the ceiling, lift your leg about 30 cm off the ground and hold for 5 seconds. Lower gently and repeat. You should feel the muscles at the front of your thigh contracting.

##### b) Knee Extension



Lie on your back with a small rolled towel under your ankle. Push your ankle down into the roll which will make your knee straighten. Hold for 5 seconds then relax and repeat.

##### c) Knee Flexion



Apart from the above exercises, it is also important to bend your knee until you can feel a stretch (but not excessive pain). This is often easier sitting on a high chair or stool. You may find your knee to be quite stiff initially but you should make steady progress as your swelling comes down.

You should feel stretching but not pain with these exercises. You may need to ice your knee and elevate your leg afterwards if there is swelling. Avoid any exercise or activity which involves weights or undue force. At your first post-operative visit you will be advised regarding further exercises or physiotherapy.

### **Follow Up**

Please call the rooms on 9984 7001 to schedule an appointment 10-14 days after your surgery.