

POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS: ACL RECONSTRUCTION

Pain Medications

- In most cases local or regional nerve blocks will provide 8-12 hours of numbness. As soon as you start to feel the numbness wearing off, begin taking oral pain medication.
- Take **Tylenol** 500mg one tab every 8 hours.
- Take **Aleve (Naproxen)** 220mg two tabs (440mg total) every 12 hours with food.
- If you still have pain after Tylenol and Aleve/Naproxen, take one **Norco** tab (5mg/325mg).
- If you still have pain after all of the above, take a second Norco tab.
- Keep in mind Norco has Tylenol in it (325mg). If you take an extra Norco, then skip a dose of Tylenol.
DO NOT exceed 3500mg of Tylenol over 24 hours.
- It is illegal to drive or operate machinery with narcotic medications.
- Do not combine alcohol or other sedatives with narcotic medications.
- You do not need to take pain medications once you no longer have pain.
You should stop the Norco first (usually 2-3 days), then wean off the others over the next week or two.

Other Medications

- Take **Aspirin** 325mg one tab once a day for the first 4 weeks to prevent blood clots.
- Take **Zofran** as needed for nausea (usually associated with anesthesia/narcotic meds).
- Take an over-the-counter stool softener (Docusate/Senna/Miralax) as needed for constipation.

Activity

- Use crutches to assist with ambulation.
- You may bear 25% of your weight on your operative extremity for the first two weeks.
- Elevate your operative extremity above the heart as much as possible to decrease swelling.
- Avoid prolonged periods standing to prevent excessive pain and swelling.

Recovery Equipment

- You should wear the knee brace at all times day and night locked in full extension.
- You may remove the brace to perform the recovery exercises and for hygiene.

Cold Therapy

- We recommend cold therapy use as much as possible in the first two weeks.
- Cold therapy units may be used continuously as instructed.
- Ice packs should be applied 30 minutes at a time, with 30 minutes off between applications.
- Do not apply ice directly to the skin to avoid burning.

Recovery Exercises

- You may perform leg bridges, heel slides (0-90 degrees), quad sets, and ankle exercises as instructed in your preoperative packet.
- Your motion goal should be to have 0-90 degrees of knee motion at your initial postoperative visit.
- Begin physical therapy as soon as possible, ideally the day after surgery.

Diet: Please refer to your preoperative packet instructions.

Incision Care: Please refer to your preoperative packet instructions.

Emergencies: Please refer to your preoperative packet instructions.