

ACL POST OP DRESSING AND EXERCISE INSTRUCTIONS

- Please be sure to bring your surgical pictures with you to your first post op visit.
- During the first 48 hours after surgery you will have a very thick gauze dressing over the leg. You may notice bleeding or drainage that soaks thru the gauze and ace wrap and starts to appear on the outer surface of the dressing.
- It will take approximately a few days for the inflammation process from the surgery to come to a peak. It is very important to ice and elevate during this time. Ice for 30 minutes every hour, while you are awake, for the first 2-3 days. Then ice 3-4 times per day for 30 minutes based on the amount of swelling that is present. You may choose to use a Cold Therapy unit (ice machine). This is a cooler that has tubing that goes to a pad which circulates cold water. Use this for 30 minutes every hour as well.
- 24 hours after surgery unlock the brace unless told otherwise. This will be the range of motion limitation until four weeks post op at which point you will be allowed to discontinue the brace unless otherwise instructed by Dr. Carter.
- Remove the brace, ace wrap, and cotton gauze 2 days after surgery, there will be a deeper dressing directly over knee (crimped gauze roll) leave this on for 5 days. After the 2 days you may shower however, the knee and crimped gauze roll must be covered to keep dry. Be careful getting in and out of the shower as there is a high risk of falling. Do not remove the steri-strips (pieces of tape over incision) if you have them. Band-aids should be applied over the incisions. There is no need for a thick gauze dressing after the 5 days and do not use any ointments over the incisions. Place the ace wrap back on, wrapping from the bottom to the top, then put the brace on.
- Begin the exercises two days after surgery, you may take your brace off during the exercises unless otherwise instructed. Some of the exercises will be difficult or even painful but you will find that letting the knee sit in one position for too long will actually cause discomfort. Your exercises will help you gain control of your leg and avoid complications with motion and blood clots after surgery. Formal physical therapy will start at 4 weeks post op. You may also remove the brace when you are sitting but must wear it when you are up and around.
- You may start weight bearing as tolerated after surgery using your crutches unless otherwise instructed (i.e. ACL Revision or meniscus repair). You must continue wearing your brace and using your crutches until 4 weeks post op.

If able to tolerate it please take one 325mg aspirin a day for 4 weeks after surgery to decrease the risk of a blood clot.

Make sure to schedule an appointment to see Dr. Carter 7-10 days after surgery.

If you have any additional questions or concerns, please feel free to contact our office (602) 277-6211.