

# NICHOLAS J. AVALLONE, M.D.

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## Instruction Sheet Following ACL Reconstruction

### **CPM (continuous passive motion) Machine:**

You should use this machine for 2-3 hours at home twice daily for a total of 4-6 hours per day. The company will explain how to operate the CPM. Your goal with this machine is to achieve 95 degrees of flexion (bending) comfortably. Every time you use the CPM you should try to increase the flexion by 5 degrees. You will experience some discomfort while trying to increase your flexion. Once 95 degrees is obtained you may call the company to pick up the machine. Also remember to take off your brace while using it.

### **Brace:**

The knee brace given to you immediately after surgery must be worn while walking and sleeping in locked extension. You may take the brace off when doing exercises and/or in the CPM machine. Brace hinges must be at the level of the knee cap. You may loosen or tighten the brace straps as necessary, but it should be snug. You will need to wear the brace for about 4-6 weeks.

### **Showering:**

You may shower 48 hours after surgery, however you must place a plastic bag over the brace while showering or you have the option to take off the brace to shower. Whatever you decide to do please use **CAUTION!!** Be careful not to slip, twist, or fall. A stool placed in the shower so you can sit is a great idea so you can stabilize your knee. Do not soak in a bath tub, hot tub, or pool until the doctor tells you it is O.K. to do so. Once you are done showering pat the wound dry.

### **Dressing:**

Remove all cotton and yellow gauze 48 hours after your surgery. Please leave steri-strips (white paper strips) on your wound until you see the doctor. Reapply ACE bandage. You do not need to place a new dressing on your knee.

### **Elevation:**

When you are not walking your leg should be straight with a pillow under your foot or ankle (**not behind your knee**). Try to elevate knee as much as possible to reduce swelling.

### **Ice:**

You should ice the knee as often as possible (especially after exercise) to reduce swelling and discomfort. Do not ice the knee more than 20 minutes at a time. Let the knee warm up before reapplication. Avoid getting your wound wet.

### **Crutches:**

Use the crutches when walking as you were taught at the surgical center. Put as much weight on your leg as you can tolerate. When you feel comfortable walking without your crutches you may do so. This usually takes about 1-2 weeks.

**Follow-up visit:**

You need to see the doctor about one week following surgery for your first post-op visit. At that time your sutures (stitches) will be removed. You will be given a physical therapy prescription to begin physical therapy.

**Common concerns:**

1. Numbness around the incision site on the outside part of the knee is a result of a disruption of a superficial nerve during the operative procedure. Most of this will resolve over time but a small area the size of a quarter usually remains numb. This is unavoidable because of the proximity of the nerve to the incision.
2. A sudden rush or feeling of fullness with pain when going from a sitting to a standing position in the knee is common after surgery.
3. Bruising and/or swelling of the shin and ankle is common after surgery. This usually occurs 3-4 days after surgery. This is caused by bleeding from the bone (which is cut during surgery) into the area just below the skin. To relieve this discomfort it is best to ice the leg. If at any time you have discomfort, swelling, or redness in the calf (behind the leg between the knee and the ankle) please call the doctor immediately.

**Please call if:**

1. If at any time you have discomfort, swelling, or redness in the calf (behind the leg between the knee and the ankle) please call the doctor immediately
2. Any oozing or redness of the wound, fevers (>101.3 degrees F), or chills.
3. Any difficulty breathing or heaviness in the chest.

**REMEMBER – these are only guidelines for what to expect following ACL surgery. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call the office at any time.**