

Knee Ligament Surgery Post Operative Instructions Nick Avallone, M.D.

Brace:

The knee brace given to you immediately after surgery must be worn in the locked extension position while walking and sleeping. You may take the brace off when you are in the CPM machine or doing exercises. 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.

Crutches:

Use your crutches as instructed on the day of your surgery. You can weight bear as tolerated, while using the crutches. Most patients will initially ascend and descend stairs by sitting on their bottom.

Ice:

Ice the knee as often as possible to reduce swelling and discomfort, 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off. Do not ice the knee for more than 20 minutes at a time. Avoid getting your wound wet for the first 48 hours. If you have a cryocuff you may keep this on continuously.

Elevate:

When you are not walking, your leg should be elevated in a straight position with a pillow under your foot or ankle (do not place a pillow under or behind your knee).

CPM (continuous passive motion) machine:

You should use the CPM machine for a total of 3-4 hours per day at home, typically in 30-60 minute increments. The medical device company that delivers your CPM will explain how to operate it. Start at 30 degrees of flexion (bending) and increase the flexion by ~5 degrees per day until you reach 90 degrees, typically between 2-3 weeks post-op. You will experience some discomfort while trying to increase your flexion. Once 90 degrees is obtained comfortably, you may discontinue use and call the company to pick up the machine. Also remember to take off your brace or unlock it while using the CPM machine.

Physical therapy:

You should begin physical therapy within 1-2 days after your operation to rehabilitate your knee.

Dressing:

Remove all cotton and yellow gauze 48 hours after your surgery and reapply the ACE bandage. You do not need to put a new gauze dressing on your wound.

Showering:

You may shower 48 hours after surgery. Please use a shower chair so that you can sit in the shower. You have the option to either place a plastic bag over your brace while showering or remove your brace. Please use CAUTION! Be careful not to slip, twist, or fall. The effects of anesthesia and/or medication may make you drowsy or light-headed. Do not soak in a bathtub, hot tub, or pool until the doctor tells you it is okay to do so. Once you are done showering, pat the wound dry.



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.

Common concerns:

Bruising, pain, discomfort, and swelling of the knee are common after surgery. To relieve this discomfort, ice and elevate the knee as described above. For pain relief, most patients take 2 Tylenol Arthritis and 2 Advil every 8 hours, as needed. You may also be given a prescription for pain medication which you can take as needed, if the Tylenol and Advil do not control your pain.

Please call if you experience:

Oozing or redness of the wound, fevers (>101.5° F), or chills.

Uncontrolled or excessive bleeding.

Calf pain, cramping, or swelling, as this may be a sign of a blood clot.

Difficulty breathing or heaviness in your chest.

REMEMBER - these are only guidelines for what to expect following knee ligament surgery. If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to call the office.