

NEW HAMPSHIRE ORTHOPAEDIC SURGERY, P.A.

Gregory W. Soghikian, M.D.

POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS **ANTERIOR CRUCIATE LIGAMENT RECONSTRUCTION**

- Please keep dressing dry.
- Keep leg elevated.
- Use an ice pack or ice wrap for 72 hours or longer for comfort.
- For the first week, keep the leg fully straight for most of the time, including sleeping in the brace, with the brace set at zero degrees. However, if you are feeling comfortable, you may remove the brace to work on gently bending at any time, putting the brace back on for ambulation and sleep.
- The brace is currently set at zero degrees and should be left at that setting for most of the time during the first week. If you are doing well and starting to bend the knee, you may increase the brace motion to match your knee's ability to bend, then return it to zero degrees each night.
- During the day you should spend at least 2 hours total with the leg up on a pillow, brace off, nothing behind the knee, to allow the knee to go to a fully straight position.
- If you have a drain, and it fills up completely, you may dump out the bloody fluid and recharge the drain by squeezing it closed before you put the plug back in.
- You should have an appointment to see our surgical nurse, or myself, 1-2 days after surgery for a change of your dressing and removal of the drain. If you are going to remove the drain and change your own dressing, then this should be done 2-3 days after surgery. You may remove all of the bandages, including the yellow, non-sticky gauze that is directly above the butterfly tapes. Keep the butterfly tapes in place. You may then re-wrap the wound with gauze, an Ace wrap, or may leave them open to the air (whatever you are most comfortable with). If there is still any drainage from the wound, you should cover it with new gauze. The drain site will typically ooze for 2-3 days.
- You may begin to put weight on the leg as soon as you feel comfortable, unless specifically instructed to do otherwise. If you have had a femoral nerve block and do not yet have full feeling in the leg, then do not attempt to place weight on it. You should only place weight on the leg when you have it in the brace.
- If at any time the dressings are painfully tight then feel free to unwrap them and then reapply them more loosely.
- It is good to move your ankle, pumping your foot up and down to exercise your calf. If it feels tight you can also stretch your calf by pulling upon your foot with a towel, you should also do straight leg raise and isometric quad tightening.
- If at any time you develop significant calf swelling and calf pain separate from pain around the operative knee, please let us know immediately as that may be a sign of a possible blood clot in the leg. Some leg and ankle swelling is normal and quite common especially if the Ace wrap is a little bit tight. If the swelling that you have is painless then usually you do not need to worry about it.
- Mild tingling in the foot and toes, especially after a block is normal. If you have any severe or progressive numbness (other than with a block) please call us at (603)669-5454.
- If you are in need of immediate urgent attention go to the emergency room or hospital nearest to your home.