

**Seth C. Gamradt, MD**  
**Orthopedic Surgery and Sports Medicine**  
**UCLA Department of Orthopaedic Surgery**  
**310.319.1234 APPT**  
**310.825.0902 OFFICE**  
**310.825.3338 FAX**  
**CA License: A769260**



Patient Sticker Here

Date

## **ACL RECONSTRUCTION POSTOP INSTRUCTIONS**

### **DAY OF SURGERY:**

1. Your Cryocuff will be placed on your knee in the recovery room. For the first 24 hours following surgery, keep the cuff on as much as possible except when you go to bed. This will help reduce the swelling and minimize the pain. However, you will need to continuously change the water so that it remains cold.
2. Your brace will be applied in the operating room. You must wear the brace, locked, for 2-3 weeks when walking. You must wear the brace locked while sleeping and showering for the first week only, as well. You may unlock it for short periods when you are sitting 2 days after the surgery.
3. There are exercises we will instruct you in that you will begin doing tomorrow.
4. Keep your leg elevated to decrease swelling, which will then in turn decrease your pain. When in bed, your leg should be straight with a pillow under the calf, NOT under the knee.
5. Prescriptions for pain medication and an anti-inflammatory will be given to you when you leave. We suggest you use the pain medication the first night prior to going to bed, in order to ease any pain when the nerve block wears off. You should avoid taking pain medications on an empty stomach, as it will make you nauseous. Otherwise, use the pain medication ONLY as needed. Use the anti-inflammatory daily, as prescribed, to reduce the swelling after surgery.

## DAY 1 AND UNTIL FIRST POST-OP VISIT:

1. The cryocuff will aid in decreasing pain and swelling. Apply the cryo-cuff for 20-30 minutes at least 4 times per day for the first few days. Then use it 2-3 times a day. You may use the cryo-cuff more frequently if you are having continued pain and swelling.
2. Remove the bandages 48 hours after surgery and apply gauze/bandaids to the wounds. Do not remove the white steri-strip tape over the lower incision. Re-apply clean Band-Aids daily over the top incisions, and a gauze pad over the lower incision daily. Do not put anything including bacitracin or ointments on or near the incisions. Use the ace wrap for 3 days after surgery if you have a considerable amount of swelling.
3. You may shower 48 hours after surgery but **Do Not** get the sutures wet. Wrap your knee with plastic wrap and secure it with tape around your thigh. Then, place the brace on and cover it using a cast bag or a garbage bag with a hole in the bottom for your foot. Secure it with tape around your ankle and thigh. If your sutures do get wet, pat them dry and re-apply fresh Band-Aids.
4. Use the crutches while standing and walking so that you are only putting partial weight on your operated for the first week.
5. Continue doing the exercises shown to you in the recovery room 2x day. Begin physical therapy 2-3 days after your surgery.
6. Do not drink alcoholic beverages or take illicit drugs when taking pain medications.
7. You may return to sedentary work/school in the next couple of days when you feel up to it. You will need to keep you leg elevated as much as possible.
8. Call the office tomorrow with any questions, and make an appointment to have your sutures removed next week.

## MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

1. There may be some bleeding and fluid leaking from the incision site. This is normal after this type of surgery. This may continue for 24-36 hours. You may change and/or reinforce the bandages as needed. **Do Not** remove the white steri strip tapes covering the lower incision even if they are wet or bloody.
2. There will be MORE swelling on days 1-3 than there is on the day of surgery. This also is normal. The swelling will decrease with the anti-inflammatory medication, the cryo-cuff and keeping it elevated. The swelling will make it more difficult to bend your knee. As the swelling goes down your motion will become easier.
3. You may develop swelling and bruising that extends from your knee down to your calf and perhaps even to your foot over the next week. Do not be alarmed. This too is normal, and it is due to gravity.
4. There may be some numbness adjacent to the incision site. This may last for 6-12 months.
5. It is also normal to develop a low-grade fever after surgery (up to 100.5°). This can last 2 days after surgery. If you have any concerns just let us know.