



ACL FAQ's

(Frequently Asked Questions) about ACL Reconstruction

Can I take a shower? You may shower, and the leg may get wet. **DO NOT REMOVE THE BUTTERFLY TAPES (IF PRESENT) UNTIL 14 DAYS AFTER SURGERY.** Remove the brace and the wraps and either sit on a chair or steady yourself with hand rails. No immersion in water is allowed for 14 days post op. This means – No soaking the leg in a bathtub, hot tub whirlpool or swimming in the ocean/pool.

Can I Drive? If surgery was performed on your left leg and you drive an automatic transmission car, you may drive within 2-3 days of surgery as long as you are not taking the narcotic pain medication. If you had surgery on the right leg, or drive a manual transmission, you may drive once you have adequate strength in the leg. This usually occurs between 10 and 14 days post op. We recommend you test your driving ability in an empty parking lot with supervision until you determine whether or not you can drive safely.

What is this small puncture wound on my thigh from? We use a guide pin to place the ACL graft in the knee. The guide pin is used for a few minutes during the surgery and there are no lasting negative effects. There may be some soreness in this area for a few weeks after surgery.

When do I start Therapy? You must begin therapy as soon as possible (unless instructed otherwise). This means that you must call for an appointment immediately after your first post operative visit. You **DO NOT** need to wait until the stitches are removed. Therapy can be done anywhere that is convenient and paid for by your insurance. A list of facilities is available.

Do I have to be in the CPM machine for 6 hours? You **ARE NOT** required to be in this machine 6 hours per day. Our rule is that if you are going to lay around and do nothing... Lay around and do nothing in the machine. If you would rather be up and around, we would rather you be up and around also. The machine does nothing for your strength, it only aids motion. It is important, so don't neglect it completely.

How long do I keep the CPM Machine? You keep the machine until you can do 90 degrees comfortably and are enrolled in formal rehabilitation. This is usually achieved by 10 days from surgery. You need to call the company for a pick up. This is not automatic.

Do I need this cold machine? The main benefit of the cold machine is that it does not get as cold as ice, therefore you can leave it on all the time if you want to. If you would prefer to use a regular ice bag, that is also acceptable. If you use ice, you must limit its use to 20 minutes at a time with an hour between applications.

Do I need crutches? UNLESS INSTRUCTED OTHERWISE – we encourage full weight bearing immediately post op. This means you may put full weight on the leg (with the brace locked straight). **YOU DO NOT NEED CRUTCHES.** We prefer that you put weight on the leg to maintain strength and to encourage healing to occur.

When do I get my stitches out? Your stitches will be removed between 7 and 14 days after surgery.

Do I need pain medication? Most patients use the Percocet for the first few days after surgery. Most patients change over to Tylenol or Advil during the first 7-10 days. Some patients require pain medication for longer periods of time.

How long do I need this brace? The brace is used to give support so that you don't need crutches. Initially, you lack the strength to stand and the brace enables you to stand and walk. Most people use the brace for about 4 weeks. The brace is adjustable and is usually shortened at your second post op visit if appropriate for your situation. Most people gradually wean themselves off the brace. You begin by not wearing it around the home in a controlled setting and gradually lessen its use.

When will my appointments be? Routine post op appointments occur at 4-5 days after surgery, 7-14 days after surgery, 4 - 6 weeks after surgery, 3 - 4 months after surgery, 6 months and 1 year.

Can I get a note for Work or School? Notes for missing school and work are available upon request.