



Post-Operative Instructions – ACL/MCL Reconstruction with Meniscectomy

Diet

- Start with clear liquids and light foods.
- Return to normal diet if you are not nauseated.

Wound Care

- Keep operative dressing in place; loosen if foot/ankle swelling occurs.
- Some bleeding and swelling is normal. If dressing becomes soaked, reinforce with additional dressings/ACE wrap.
- Remove bandage 2 days after surgery.
- Steri-strips over the main incision should stay on until your office visit.
- Keep incisions clean and dry.
- Showering allowed after 2 days using:
 - A large garbage bag over the dressing or
 - Saran Wrap sealed with tape at top and bottom.
- Do NOT soak or scrub the operative leg (no baths).

Medications

- Pain medication injected during surgery lasts 8–24 hours.
- Narcotic pain medication may be needed briefly; take as directed.
- Common side effects: nausea, drowsiness, constipation.
 - Take with food.
 - Use over-the-counter laxative if constipated.
- Anti-nausea medication provided; take if needed.
- Contact the office if nausea/vomiting persists.
- Ibuprofen 200–400 mg may be taken between narcotic doses to:
 - Smooth pain fluctuations



- Reduce narcotic use
- Extend time between doses
- Do not drive or operate machinery while taking narcotics.

Activity

- Elevate leg above heart level to reduce swelling.
- Do not place pillows under the knee; place under foot/ankle instead.
- Use crutches; full weight bearing is allowed unless instructed otherwise.
- Avoid activities that increase pain/swelling (long standing/walking) for 7–10 days.
- Avoid long sitting without elevation and long-distance travel for 2 weeks.
- No driving until cleared by your physician.
- May return to sedentary work or school in 3–4 days if pain is tolerable.

Ice Therapy

- Begin immediately after surgery.
- Use icing machine continuously or ice packs every 2 hours for 30 minutes.
- Continue until your first post-op visit.
- Keep leg elevated while icing.

Exercise

- Begin exercises 24 hours after surgery unless told otherwise:
 - Straight leg raises
 - Heel slides
 - Ankle pumps
- Expect some discomfort and stiffness; bending the knee is safe unless instructed otherwise.
- Perform exercises 3–4 times daily until first post-op visit.
- Motion goals for first visit:



- Full extension (straight)
- 90° flexion (bend)
- Formal physical therapy begins 3–4 days post-op (prescription provided pre-op).

When to Call the Office

Call (214) 265-3260 or Dr. Heinrich at 214-326-9141 if you experience:

- Painful swelling or numbness
- Unrelenting pain
- Fever over 101° or chills
- Redness around incisions
- Continuous drainage or bleeding (small amount is normal)
- Difficulty breathing
- Excessive nausea/vomiting

Appointments

- First post-op appointment is typically 10–14 days after surgery.
- If not already scheduled, call the office after surgery to set it up