Post-Op ACL

**Weeks 1 & 2**

1. First two weeks post surgery are critical to recovery:
   - Returning to daily life activities
   - Avoiding complications

2. Your surgery was done through three small punctures or “portals” and a small incision for obtaining the graft or tendon tissue used to reconstruct your ACL

   A sterile dressing was applied to your knee under your brace. This should be kept dry and clean. You do not need to change this dressing. This will be done for you at physical therapy.

   Once your incisions are healed, stitches will be removed and you may shower. Until that time, you must sponge bathe around your knee, keeping it dry.

**Brace**

Your brace will support your leg until adequate muscle strength has returned. This will be monitored by your physical therapist. This way stresses that may stretch your healing graft will be minimized. Do not remove your brace at home until instructed by your physical therapist.

**Weight Bearing**

Crutches are used to facilitate walking after surgery. It is ok to bear weight on your operated leg as comfort allows. Advance slowly and as comfort allows. Most people are off crutches by one to two weeks after surgery.

**Pain/Discomfort**

Every measure has been taken to minimize discomfort after surgery. Some discomfort is reasonable and pain medication should be used as prescribed. It works best when used regularly (every 4 to 6 hours) and not when pain has become severe. Do not take more than eight (8) tablets in one day. If pain is minor, use plain Tylenol (1000 mg.) instead of prescription medicine.

If Toradol (Ketoprofen) has been prescribed for you, it should be taken regularly every six hours. Some people prefer using Ibuprofen (Advil, motrin) or Aleve.

These, too, should be used regularly and not in response to pain.

**Ice**

The control of swelling is critical to rapid and optimal recovery. Ice or an ice substitute should be used 3 or 4 times daily on, under, and/or around your knee. Apply over your ace wrap or other thin ply covering for about 30 minutes each session.

Elevate your knee during icing or whenever possible during the day. Prop a rolled towel or pillow under your heel to facilitate extension and support your knee. Never place pillows or objects behind your knee or calf which will promote hamstring spasm and stress your knee.

**Post-operative Exercise**

While at home after surgery, simple exercises can promote early healing and function. Bending your ankle up and down (ankle pumps) will pump your calf muscle - keeping blood flowing and restoring muscle function. Ten repetitions frequently throughout the day is recommended. Tightening your thigh muscle (quad sets) will likewise restore muscle function and promote recovery. Holding a contraction for five seconds before relaxing, should likewise be done frequently.