

## **ANTERIOR CRUCIATE LIGAMENT SURGERY**

### **Dr. McCormack Patient Instructions**

#### **PREPARATION FOR SURGERY**

Prior to your surgery date you should:

- Purchase an ice compression device. (Examples of ice compression devices available are Cryocuff, Polar Care Cub, etc.) Please read the package insert which explains how to use them.
- Purchase prescribed medications (anti-inflammatory, pain medication) and Gravol suppositories.
- Purchase or rent crutches (practice their use to become familiar).
- If directed by office, Phone the Pre-Admission Clinic at the hospital to make an appointment once your surgery date is known.

#### **DAY BEFORE YOUR SURGERY**

- On the day before your surgery, please call your doctor McCormack's office to find out the time you should arrive at the Admitting Department.
- Do not eat or drink anything after midnight, the night before your surgery.



#### **DAY OF YOUR SURGERY**

- Do not drink or eat anything (including coffee, gum or candy) until after your surgery.
- You will be admitted to the Ward or Surgical Daycare two hours prior to your surgery.
- Bring medications, crutches and ice compression device to the hospital with you.
- An intravenous will be started before your surgery, which you will receive antibiotics through.
- I will see in the pre-operative area to review the plan and answer any questions that have arisen since our last visit. The leg we are operating on will also be marked by the surgical team, before we proceed to the operating room.
- You will be seen by an Anaesthetist prior to surgery. This is a good time to ask any questions concerning your anaesthetic.
- From the pre-operative area, you will be moved into the Operating Room where the Anaesthetist and your Doctor will perform your surgery.
- The ice compression device will be applied to your knee when in the operating room (**so make sure it goes with you to surgery**).

## AFTER YOUR SURGERY



After your operation, you will be taken to the Recovery Room. A nurse will check your blood pressure and pulse frequently. You will wear an oxygen mask for a short period of time. Indicate to your nurse if you are having pain or feel sick to your stomach. Your nurse will give you medication as ordered by your doctor.

Your leg/foot may appear red in color. This is because it has been washed with a red tinged antiseptic in the operating room.

Notify your nurse if you notice any numbness, tingling or coolness of your foot.

The intravenous will be left until you are able to drink fluids and have received the last dose of antibiotics as ordered by your doctor.

## DISCHARGE INFORMATION

Your knee will be swollen and somewhat uncomfortable for a period of time after your operation. This is normal. Elevate your leg and apply your ice compression device (re-circulate water every hour you are awake) to reduce swelling. If you did not get an ice compression device, apply crushed ice in a zip lock bag for 15 minutes out of each hour.

### 1. Medications

You will be discharged with a prescription for pain medication and an anti-inflammatory medication. This will be more effective if taken regularly to get a steady level into the blood stream. That means if there is moderate pain take one plain Tylenol + one prescription tablet. If it is mild pain take 2 tylenol. It's best if you take regular meds for the first day or two. Pain can be further controlled by the use of ice to the knee. If the leg hangs down, the pain will be much worse. If you have a reaction to the pain medication, or if you are unable to reasonably control the pain, call your Doctor's office.



### 2. Bandage

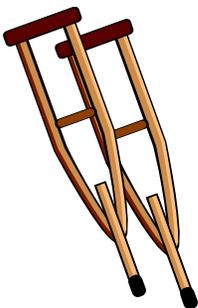
You will have a bandage on your knee. There will also be a compression stocking from toe to thigh. Ensure that this does not get wrinkled behind your knee. It does not need to be removed. Alternatively, you may have the knee wrapped in a tensor bandage which should be removed and re-wrapped daily from the midcalf to the lower thigh. This elastic bandage may also have padding under it. If the bandage feels too tight or you feel numbness and tingling in the foot, loosen the padding/bandage.



Try to leave the dressing intact, and keep it clean and dry. Sometimes the dressing can soak through. If blood soaks through the dressing, the dressing can be changed using sterile gauze, and a lightly applied elastic wrap to hold it in place. The use of the compression stocking will help control swelling of the leg but, if you wish, may be left off at night when in bed. You can also remove stocking from the good leg and use it to change the stocking on the operated leg (to have a clean one).

You can change the dressing at 48 hours to a lighter dressing. Leave the steri-strips (tapes) in place.

### 3. *Activity*



You can take as much weight on the leg as you feel comfortable and it is safe to take your full weight on the leg. However, it is wise to use crutches to support the leg, as the muscles in the thigh will not work properly initially, and the leg could give way causing injury.

You may move the knee as much as tolerated, and early movement is encouraged (bending and straightening). In particular, full straightening (extension) of the knee is important. Do not put pillows behind the knee, which will keep the knee bent (flexed) somewhat.

You do not need to use a brace on the leg (unless specifically instructed), as the brace can cause problems with excessive swelling, as it may be too tight on top of the surgical dressing.

### 4. *Bathing*

If you prefer to shower, wrap plastic around the bandage and tape snugly at the top and bottom.

For a tub bath, put 2-3 inches of water in the bottom of the tub and sit with your operated leg on the rim of the tub or on a footstool in the tub.

If your bandage gets wet, it must be changed to prevent infection (see above).

5. If bleeding occurs, apply pressure for 10 – 15 minutes or until the bleeding stops.
6. The sensation of “splashing” of fluid in the knee is normal and will gradually disappear.
7. If you are unable to pass urine and your bladder is hurting, put warm washcloths on your lower stomach, to allow your body to relax and let the urine come out. If you continue to have difficulties, go to the Emergency Department.
8. Feeling sick to your stomach can sometimes be a problem post surgery. If you experience nausea, you can take over the counter Gravol (Dimenhydrinate) suppositories as per the package instructions.

9. Due to lack of activity and pain medication, you may experience some constipation. Try to prevent prolonged constipation by drinking lots of fluids, and eating foods that are high in fibre. If necessary, take over the counter laxatives.

10. Call my office to arrange a follow-up appointment. During this doctor's appointment we will review the details of your surgery, discuss physiotherapy requirements, the use of crutches, bathing instructions, etc.

11. If you have had a general anaesthetic, the effects persist for many hours. The following precautions are advised by your anaesthetist:

- Do not drive your car for at least 24 hours.
- Do not drink alcohol for 24 hours.
- You may eat when you feel like it, but take small quantities at first.
- Have an adult stay with you overnight.

**NOTIFY DR. MCCORMACK, OR GO TO THE LOCAL EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT IF YOU HAVE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SYMPTOMS:**



- Severe pain, or pain that increases after 2<sup>nd</sup> post operative day
- Increasing redness or pus-like drainage from your knee
- Continuous bleeding
- Continued, severe swelling in your leg/foot
- Fever greater than 38 degrees centigrade or chills

**If you go to any other doctor because you are concerned about possible infection, make sure they aspirate the knee joint (for cultures) *before* starting antibiotics**

**AFTER SURGERY, WHILE ON CRUTCHES,**

**THE FOLLOWING TIPS MAY BE HELPFUL:**

- Wear safe footwear
- Wear loose fitting sportswear
- Use a backpack
- Carry sealed beverage containers (use caution when carrying hot beverages)
- If sitting, elevate your leg



**Dr. Robert McCormack**

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