



# ARLINGTON ORTHOPEDICS

What to expect after

## ACL Reconstruction

- ❖ You should not have ANYTHING to eat or drink after midnight the night before your surgery.
- ❖ This includes NO gum, mints, candy, lifesavers or lollipops!
- ❖ Please make sure to remove ALL jewelry.
- ❖ When you arrive at the hospital or surgery center, you will be checked in and given an IV.
- ❖ You will be offered a nerve block, which I do recommend. This will be done pre-operatively by the anesthesiologist. It is an injection around your upper thigh that numbs the nerves to your leg and lasts 15 - 20 hours. This will give you pain relief that hopefully lasts throughout your first night.
- ❖ When the nerve block wears off, you will likely be in pain. This can range from mild to severe. If you experience severe pain, this is still normal. Nothing is wrong. You would have woken up with worse pain if you did not have the nerve block!
- ❖ During first three days, the pain is usually the worst, and then gradually subsides after that.
- ❖ Numbness, tingling, soreness and bruising are all normal
- ❖ Your knee may also be warm to touch for the first few days.
- ❖ You may also experience swelling in the leg, ankle and foot. This is normal. I recommend ice and elevation
- ❖ You will likely continue to have pain for several weeks or even months. Recovery from knee surgery takes several months. BE PATIENT!
- ❖ All you need to do for the first two weeks is the following:
  - ✓ You may be weight bearing as tolerated
  - ✓ Exception: meniscus repairs will be NON weight bearing for the 1<sup>st</sup> two weeks. Keep your brace on and locked in extension. Your brace will be locked for the first three weeks.
  - ✓ Unlock the brace but continue wearing it for the fourth week. Then you may remove it.
  - ✓ Use the CPM (continuous passive motion) machine for the first three weeks
  - ✓ You may remove your brace for the CPM

- ❖ At your two week visit, you will have your sutures removed and will be given a script for physical therapy
- ❖ You will be in therapy for about 8 weeks - 12 weeks.
- ❖ Driving:
  - ✓ If you had surgery on your LEFT knee, you can begin driving when you are no longer taking narcotic pain medications.
  - ✓ If you had surgery on your RIGHT knee, you should figure on starting to drive at 5 weeks post-op
- ❖ If you had a meniscal repair, this will be 6 weeks post-op
  - ✓ Your restrictions will be as follows: (unless otherwise directed by your physician)
  - ✓ NO lifting / carrying / pushing / pulling greater than 10 lbs for 6 months
  - ✓ NO kneeling / crawling / climbing
  - ✓ You may begin to run at 3 months post-op (4 months if meniscal repair)
  - ✓ In sports: No cutting / pivoting for 6 months
  - ✓ Return to sports: 6-8 months depending on the sport