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POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR PATIENTS HAVING ANTERIOR CRUCIATE LIGAMENT (ACL) RECONSTRUCTION

1. You have just undergone major knee ligamentous reconstruction surgery and our initial goals will be to control your discomfort, increase your range of motion and keep the swelling in your knee to a minimum.
2. You will be using a continuous passive motion machine (CPM) at home to increase your range of motion progressively. You should use the CPM machine 3 times each day (morning, afternoon and evening). You should use the CPM machine a minimum of 2 hours each session. The initial settings will be from full extension (zero degrees) to 40 degrees of flexion. You should increase the amount of flexion by 10-20 degrees every day with the goal of obtaining at least 90 degrees of flexion within 7 days following surgery. Emphasize full extension of the knee when not using the CPM machine.
3. Exercise your ankles by moving the ankle and foot in circles as well as moving the hip from side to side. You will begin a post-operative knee rehabilitation program approximately one week post-operatively. You will be directed to schedule an appointment with the physical therapist by Dr. Caldwell at your first post-operative appointment.
4. The knee brace that was placed on your knee at the time of surgery must be removed while you are using the CPM machine. The brace must be on your knee at all times while weight-bearing, out of bed or a resting position and while sleeping. The brace should fit in a snug position with the hinges located at the knee joint when the brace is reapplied.
5. Post-operatively you can put up to 100% of your weight on the operated knee. Crutches or cane (placed in the opposite hand) are the most helpful to assist you with walking.
6. Keep the operated knee elevated for the first 5-7 days after surgery while you are resting.
7. It is normal for the knee to develop swelling post-operatively. If you have been fitted with a Polar care ice unit, please use this device continuously for the first 3-5 days after surgery. This device circulates cold water around your knee for pain relief and control of post-operative swelling. The pad may be wrapped over the knee with an ace bandage and used in conjunction with the CPM machine. If you have not been given a Polar Care ice unit, apply ice to your knee for 15-20 minutes 4-5 times each day for the first 3-5 days following surgery. Apply ice to your knee for 15-20 minutes 3-4 times each day for the first 3 days following surgery. Thereafter, you may apply ice to the knee if you feel that the knee is painful or swollen. Do not apply Polar Care or ice directly to your skin.
8. If a Pain Buster has been applied in your knee it will need to be removed in our office on _____. This device slowly releases pain medications directly into the knee to help decrease post-operative pain. Please call the office to schedule an appointment. Our office phone number is #510-663-7700.
9. Please leave the bandages on your knee in place until _____. On _____ you may remove your bandages and take a shower. Do not remove the steri-strips over your incision sites. Apply only soap and water to your knee. After showering please dry your incision sites well. Do not put any lotions or ointments directly over your incision sites. Please cover your incision sites with band-aids. Place a 6 inch ace wrap around your knee to help decrease the swelling in your knee.
10. You may resume eating after your surgery. Initially begin eating foods such as toast, crackers and clear liquids. You may progress to your regular diet as tolerated.
11. Please call the office to schedule your first post-operative appointment. Our office phone number is #510-663-7700. Dr. Caldwell would like to see you on _____.
12. You have been provided with the medications to take post-operatively. Please take these medications as directed. If you have any questions please call our office for guidance.
13. If you have any questions, problems or concerns please call our office directly.