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The following applies to: ACL reconstruction

Immobilizer/Crutches: At all times for ambulation for the first few days, may discontinue when walking well and have good strength.

*if meniscus repair associated: Hinged knee brace locked at 0 with ambulation at all times until 6 weeks after surgery.

Weight bearing status: Weight bear as tolerated, with crutches for balance then as needed.

Physical therapy: Start formal physical therapy after **one week** from surgery. May do the below listed exercises 2-3 times daily as tolerated.

WOUND CARE:

- Shower: as long as bandages are covered with waterproof covering.
- Bandages: Can remove 2-3 days after surgery, leave white strips in place.
- After bandages have been removed may shower covering incision sites with waterproof bandages/covering, keep out of direct spray from water and pat dry.
- Reapply ACE bandage or compression sock to involved knee, from ankle to above the knee.
- NO soaking in bathtub/hot tub or pool for first 2-3 weeks.
- Signs of infection: excessive or worsening pain, increased redness around the incision sites, drainage from incisions that looks like pus and/or is foul smelling, if you run a fever above 101° F -

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PAIN/SWELLING CONTROL:

- Start your **pain medication** before your nerve block wears off if you had one with surgery.
- For the first few days take your pain medication regularly as instructed, then wean as tolerated. Avoid taking pain medications on an empty stomach it can make you nauseous.
- **Remove brace to ice** for 20-30 minutes, at least four times for several days. You may use it more frequently as needed. It will help in reducing pain. Avoid placing ice directly on bare skin to prevent frostbite and give a break of 30 minutes in between sessions.
- Elevation– Keep leg (knee) elevated as often as possible with a pillow under your calf, NOT under the knee.

POSTOPERATIVE KNEE EXERCISES: (may start 1st day after surgery)

- You will begin flexion (bending) after surgery. You may remove the brace to work on active bending (using your own muscle power) as tolerated to no more than 90 degrees and straightening (using your good leg to help straighten the operated leg).
- Active control of quadriceps muscle
 - **Straight leg raises** while wearing brace locked straight, foot straight and turned out, lift leg up off bed/floor. Goal is 50-100 reps three times per day.
 - **Isometric quadriceps contractions** (letting the leg rest straight), squeeze the quad muscles without lifting the leg off the bed/floor.