



**ChildrensHospitalLosAngeles**

*International Leader in Pediatrics*

## Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL) Tear Post-operative Care

### What to bring with you the day of surgery:



[www.bledsoebrace.com/products/img/or.jpg](http://www.bledsoebrace.com/products/img/or.jpg)

1. Bledsoe Brace: You will be given a Bledsoe brace that you need to bring with you the day of surgery. We will put it on your knee after surgery in the operating room. Please wear this brace for walking/crutching, sleeping and when you are up moving around for the first 6 weeks after surgery. You can only take your brace off for physical therapy or if you are sitting on the couch/bed working on your exercises. You should work on your movement **AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE**. You will use the brace for the first 6 weeks after surgery. The first 2 weeks your range of motion in your knee will be set at 0-20 degrees. Weeks 3-6 after surgery, the brace will be set to allow full range of motion.

2. Crutches: Please bring your crutches with you on the day of surgery, as you will need them when you leave the hospital.

### What to expect after surgery:

Swelling: It is normal for your knee to be swollen for up to 6-8 weeks after surgery. It is important to **ice** your knee multiple times a day and **elevate** your knee above the level of your heart throughout the day. This will also help decrease the pain.

Pain: The doctor will give you a prescription for pain medication to use for the first few days after surgery. Please take this medication as directed. When your pain starts to decrease it is best to try to wean off of the strong pain medication (as it may make you constipated) and switch to Motrin/Ibuprofen or Tylenol as needed for pain. Take these medications with food.

Dressings/Bandages: After 3-5 days you can remove the dressing on your knee from surgery and start to shower. Please leave the steri-strips (little skin tapes) on until your follow up appointment. Please do not submerge your leg under water until the doctor sees you.

Moving your knee: It is important that you start moving (bending and straightening) your knee as soon as possible after surgery only while laying down. You can sit on the couch, take your brace off, and start to bend and straighten your knee. This is the only time the brace should be off your knee.

School: Usually children are out of school for 3-5 days after surgery to recover. We can write a note if you need when you are ready to go back to school. When you go back to school ask the teacher for an extra chair to elevate your knee during school.

Follow-up appointment: Please call the orthopaedic clinic to schedule a follow-up appointment with the doctor for 10-14 days after surgery at 323-361-2142. We will continue to follow up with you in the clinic numerous times over the next year after surgery to make sure that you are healing appropriately.

Physical Therapy: Physical therapy is very important after surgery to regain the function of your knee and return to activities. The goal is to have at least one physical therapy appointment before your first follow-up visit with the doctor at 2 weeks. Please try to schedule a physical therapy appointment as soon as possible after surgery.

### **Can I walk on my knee after surgery?**

If you had only an ACL reconstruction surgery than you can put weight on your leg immediately after surgery when you feel able. Sometimes with ACL tears, the meniscus is torn as well. If you had a meniscal tear, your surgery will include either meniscal repair (stitching the torn meniscus back together) or meniscectomy (shaving the torn meniscus away). Following the surgery the doctor will come tell you which type of meniscal surgery you had. *If you had a meniscal repair then you are NOT able to walk on your leg for 6 weeks after surgery. If you had a meniscectomy then you CAN walk on your leg after surgery as you tolerate it.*

### **When can I go back to sports?**

Physical Therapy is the most important factor in getting you back to playing sports after surgery. You should have physical therapy appointments 1-2 times a week. At first, the most important thing is to regain your full range of motion of your knee. By 6 weeks after surgery the goal is to have full range of motion of your knee, just like the opposite knee. At approximately 3 months after surgery, patients can start straight ahead jogging on even surfaces (track or on a treadmill). Then at approximately 4-6 months after surgery you may be able to start going back to sports and activities. This will depend on your surgery, physical therapy, and how you are recovering from surgery. The doctor will let you know when you can start these activities at your follow-up appointments.

**Please call at any time if you have questions or concerns.**