



What to Expect after ACL Surgery

Andrea Saterbak, MD

- 1. You will have a straight leg immobilizer after surgery**
 - a. You will receive a smaller brace at your first post-op visit
- 2. Physical therapy should be started 2–5 days after surgery**
 - a. Incision inspection and dressing change
- 3. You will be able to bear weight with the aid of crutches**
 - a. 4-point gait
- 4. Swelling:**
 - a. Very common after surgery
 - b. Elevate leg above your heart
 - c. Ice at least 5-6 times a day (20 minutes on 20 minutes off)
 - d. Compression
 - i. Ace wrap or compression sleeve
 - e. Ankle pumps (while leg is elevated, repeatedly point and flex the foot)
 - i. This pushes swelling out of the leg and back into the lymph system
 - f. Swelling will come and go through out recovery
- 5. There will be post-surgical pain**
 - a. Read through the *Narcotics/Pain Medications* handout
 - b. Ice and elevation work hand-in-hand with narcotic medication for pain relief
- 6. Wound management:**
 - a. Keep steri-strips on
 - b. Keep covered with non-adherent gauze pad
 - c. Call if the following arise
 - i. Increase in redness
 - ii. Warmth to the touch
 - iii. Drainage
 - iv. Increase in pain for no reason
 - v. Fever above 101 degrees
- 7. Showering:**
 - a. You can shower 2–3 days after surgery
 - b. Do not scrub incisions
 - c. Let water run over incisions
 - d. Pat dry
 - e. Do not take steri-strips off
 - f. Cover as needed
 - g. If you have sutures, they will be removed at your first post-op visit
- 8. Driving depends on the following:**
 - a. Which leg surgery was on

- b. Must be off narcotic medication during the day
- c. Must be able to slam on the brakes
- d. Practice in a parking lot before you go on the roads

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Dr. Saterbak's team at 651-351-2618 or SaterbakAcareteam@tcomn.com