

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What if my dressings get wet?

Call our clinic to come in for a dressing change if saturated. If splashed, you may use hair dryer on cool setting to dry if only a portion of bandage damp.

2. Do I sleep in the brace?

Yes, until instructed otherwise during postoperative follow-ups.

3. How much am I allowed to bend the knee?

You will start bending the knee right away. How much you can bend the knee depends on whether or not you have a meniscus repair (different from a meniscectomy which is removal of the torn part). You are limited over the first 6 weeks with a meniscus repair.

4. How will I manage the pain after surgery?

ACL reconstruction is not a pain-free surgery. It is highly unlikely that your pain will be at a 0/10 in the first 2 weeks. Optimize pain control by elevating, using ice, taking the medication as directed and moving the foot and ankle around to pump blood.

5. Can I unbuckle or remove the brace?

Yes, you may open or remove the brace when awake and seated or lying down. It must be on and buckled when getting up or sleeping. If you are sitting on the sofa or lying down it is safe to remove or open the brace and let the leg bend.

6. How long will I be on crutches?

This will depend on any additional procedures (meniscal repair / cartilage repair). If you undergo ACL reconstruction without additional procedures, you'll use crutches for about 1-3 weeks. If you have additional procedures like a meniscus repair, you may need crutches for 6-7 weeks.

7. Can I drive?

You are able to drive when you meet the following criteria:

- a. You are off narcotic pain medication
- b. If you've had RIGHT knee surgery you must be able to walk without crutches or cane, put full weight on the leg and be able to slam on the brake if needed.
- c. You feel that you could safely stop
- d. If you've had LEFT knee surgery then as soon as you are off the pain medication, and if you drive an automatic car. If you drive a manual car then same rules as above.

We recommend you test your driving ability in an empty parking lot with supervision until you determine whether or not you can drive safely.

8. What is this small puncture wound on my thigh from?

We use a guide pin to place the ACL graft in the knee. The guide pin is used for a few minutes during the surgery and there are no lasting negative effects. There may be some soreness in this area after surgery.

9. When can I return to work?

It depends on the type of job you have. If you do mainly desk work or sedentary work, you may return when you feel up to it and you are off narcotics. Most people return within 1-2 weeks. If you have a physical/labor intensive job, you may be out 4-7 months. Sports and high-level rotational activities will take minimum of 9 months to return to. You must also pass the return to sport testing, otherwise you are at higher risk of injuring the ACL in either knee.

10. When can I return to sports?

9-12 months. It is not recommended to return to sports sooner than 9 months as many research studies show that the highest risk of re-tearing the ACL is when patients return to sports before 9 months. Depending on risk factors and additional procedures, sometimes we wait 12 months. Prior to going back to sports, you must pass strength testing protocols performed by the physical therapist to ensure that you are ready to play sports not only for the injured knee, but to lower the risk of tearing the OTHER side ACL.

11. How long will I need physical therapy:

Most patients attend physical therapy for about 9 months after surgery. This will be more frequent at the beginning and become less frequent as time goes on.