Knee Immobilization

You have been prescribed a knee immobilizer. This is used to support and protect an injured or painful knee. Knee immobilizers keep your knee from being used while it is healing. Some of the common immobilizers used include splints (air, plaster, fiberglass or aluminum) or casts. Wear your knee immobilizer as instructed and only remove it as instructed. If the immobilizer is used to protect broken bones, torn ligaments or torn cartilage, it may be four to six weeks before you are able to begin rehabilitating your knee, and it may be longer than that before you are able to return to athletic activity.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Use powder to control irritation from sweat and friction.
- Adjust the immobilizer to be firm but not tight. Signs of an immobilizer that is too tight include:
  - Swelling.
  - Numbness.
  - Color change in your foot or ankle.
  - Increased pain.
- While resting, raise your leg above the level of your heart. This reduces throbbing and helps healing. Prop it up with pillows.
- Remove the immobilizer to bathe and sleep. Wear it other times until you see your doctor again.

When your splint or cast is removed.

- Stretching and strengthening are important in caring for and preventing knee injuries. If your knee begins to get sore while you are conditioning, decrease or back off your activities until you no longer have discomfort. Then gradually resume your activities.
- When strengthening your knee, increase your activities a little at a time so as not to develop injuries from over use.
- Work out an exercise plan with your caregiver or physical therapist to get the best program for you.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- Your knee seems to be getting worse rather than better.
- You have increasing pain or swelling in the knee, foot, or ankle.
- You have problems caused by the knee immobilizer or it breaks or needs replacement.
- You have increased swelling or redness or soreness (*inflammation*) in your knee.
- Your leg becomes warm and more painful.
- You develop an unexplained temperature over 102º F (38.9º C).

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

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