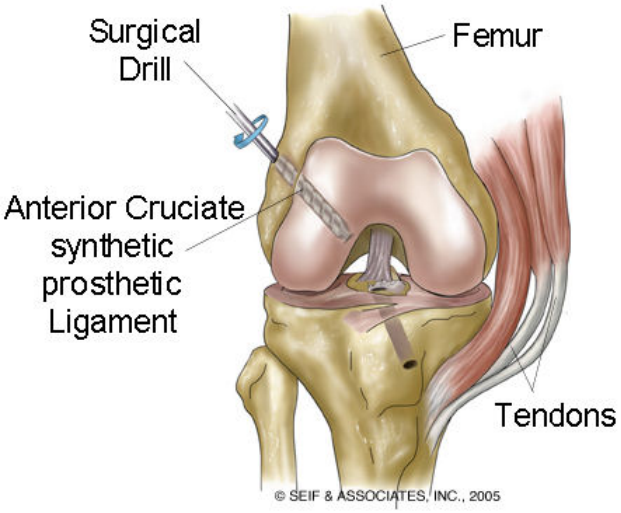
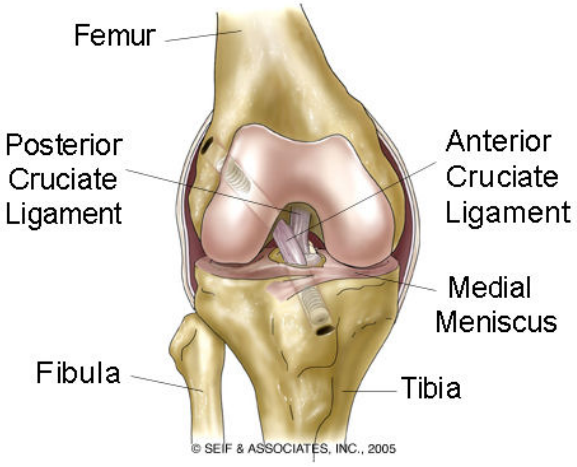
Anterior Cruciate Surgery, Care After Surgery
With Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL) Repair

DRESSING CARE
- Keep dressings on until your return appointment.
- Some blood staining of your dressing may occur. If dressing becomes *saturated* (soaked), you may reinforce it with another layer.
- DO NOT REMOVE DRESSINGS unless instructed to do so.
- Keep dressings dry.



ACTIVITIES
- For several days after surgery, it is important to cough and breathe deeply.
- Some patients experience significant pain.
- Apply ice over the Ace wraps to knee area at least four times a day for 72 hours (continuous ice if wearing E-Z wrap Immobilizer).
- Keep leg *elevated* (raised) for 24 - 48 hours. This will help prevent the swelling which causes much of the pain after surgery.
- A tingling sensation in the leg is not unusual for 24 hours.
- Take pain pills as instructed.
- Do not drive or operate machinery until further instructed by surgeon.



WEIGHT BEARING
- Use crutches with weight bearing as advised by your surgeon.
- Wear leg brace as directed by surgeon.

EXERCISES
The following exercise may be started in the recovery room and be continued at home until your return appointment:
- **Active Motion Pumps:** Move the foot and ankle up and down 20 - 30 times per hour to help reduce swelling.

DIET
- On the day of surgery, try clear liquids in small amounts such as water, pop, Kool-aid, clear juice, popsicles, broth or Jell-O. If you are doing well with liquids, slowly move to your regular diet. It is recommended to avoid dairy products and greasy or spicy foods the day of surgery.
- A well balanced high protein diet is essential for *optimal* (best) healing.
- **DO NOT** drink alcohol for 24 hours after surgery or while taking pain pills.

REMINDER
- Start the prescribed pain pills as soon as you get home.
- Take them as prescribed including through the night until the next day whether or not you feel pain.
- After this time, take the pain pills as you feel you need them.
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.

- Note when your last pain medication was given.
- Ask your caregiver when to resume taking any blood thinning medications (i.e., Coumadin, aspirin, etc).

COMPLICATIONS

Deep Vein Thrombosis (blood clots in deep veins) can be one of the complications of inactivity due to surgery. Some of the signs and symptoms may be:

- *Chronic* (continued) pain in the legs
- Swelling and/or redness in the legs
- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain

To help prevent the formation of blood clots in your legs, it is very important to do the following activities while awake:

- Move your legs and arms around several times per hour (as your surgical procedure permits).
- Cough and deep breathe several times per hour
- Move your ankles in an up and down motion (ankle pumps) several times per hour.
- Take short walks hourly around the house, starting the day of surgery (as your surgical procedure permits).
- Follow any special instructions that your caregiver has given you.
- Notify your caregiver if you have any signs or symptoms of Deep Vein Thrombosis.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ATTENTION IF:

- There is persistent and/or excessive bleeding from your *incision* (cut from surgery).
- The dressing or incisional area has a foul odor or pus-like drainage.
- The incisional area becomes swollen, red or hot to touch.
- You develop an *elevated* (higher) temperature.
- You are unable to urinate by 8 hours after surgery.
- You develop prolonged nausea or vomiting.
- You develop coldness, increased numbness or tingling, change in color, or significant increase in pain.
- You may loosen and rewrap to reduce these symptoms. If this does not help, call your physician.

Contact your local hospital Emergency Room if you require medical attention and can not reach your physician.

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