

Recovering after Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL) Reconstruction

How do I control pain after surgery?

- For the first 24 hours after surgery, take your pain medication as prescribed. As your pain decreases, take your medication less often.
- Swelling is normal after surgery. **Ice, elevation and rest will help manage your swelling.**
- Ice as much as possible for the first few days following surgery. Ice after performing your exercises to help control pain and swelling.
- Elevate your leg on pillows when sitting or lying down. Place the pillows lengthwise under your calf/knee so that your knee remains straight.

Will I be able to walk after surgery?

- Unless instructed differently by your surgeon, you will be able to walk with “protected” weight bearing on your operated leg. This means that crutches are required to protect the ACL reconstruction but you are encouraged to walk as normally as possible. **Remember to bring crutches to the hospital with you.**
- As your physiotherapist advises, you may progress from 2 crutches to 1 crutch to no assist over the course of 3-6 weeks.

When do I start exercises after surgery?

- Your exercises are an important part of your recovery. Begin the exercises the day after surgery and do them consistently 3-4 times/day as instructed. Do each exercise within your pain tolerance.

When can I drive after surgery?

- Please confirm with your surgeon when you are allowed to drive.
 - *Right leg* – you will not be able to drive for **6-9 weeks** post-op. Your surgeon will discuss your ability to drive with you at your 6 week follow-up appointment
 - *Left leg* – you will not be able to drive for a **minimum of 2 weeks**. Your surgeon will discuss your ability to drive at your 2 week follow up appointment

When can I return to work/sport after surgery?

- Return to work depends on your occupation. Your surgeon and physiotherapist can advise you on safe return to work.
- On average, patients return to sedentary **work** in 3 months and **sports** 9-12 months following surgery.

Will I need physiotherapy?

- Your surgeon will provide you with a referral for physiotherapy. Physiotherapy is necessary to guide your rehabilitation.
- Your physiotherapy will follow the protocol available at: <http://fowlerkennedy.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/PHYSIOTHERAPY-FOLLOWING-ACL-RECONSTRUCTION-PROTOCOL-November-2015.pdf>
- You may choose to go to any physiotherapy clinic you wish. Physiotherapy is available at no charge to you at:
 - Strathroy Middlesex General Hospital: 519-246-5901
 - Four Counties Health Services: (Newbury) 519-693-6501