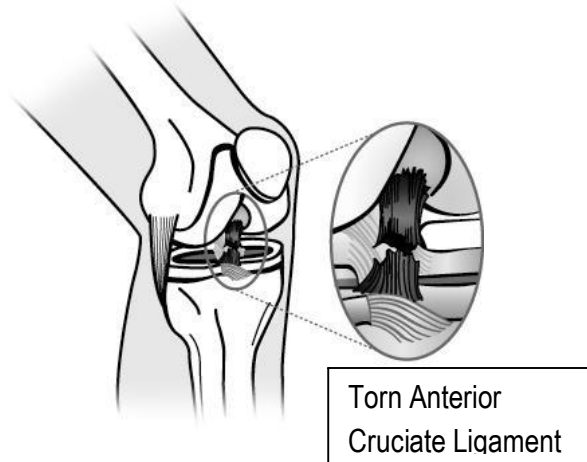


Anterior Cruciate Ligament Repair (ACL)



How to Care for Yourself After You Go Home

UHN



**You have had a general anesthetic.
Do not drive a car or drink alcohol for 24 hours.**

What is Anterior Cruciate Ligament Repair (ACL)?

ACL stands for Anterior Cruciate Ligament. Your doctor has repaired your ACL to lessen the pain and swelling in your knee. This operation also helps you move your knee normally again and strengthens the muscles around your knee.

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After Your Surgery

What can you eat and drink after your operation?

You can go back to eating and drinking what you normally would after your surgery.

If you are nauseous (sick to your stomach) or vomiting, you can take anti-nausea medication, which you can get from your pharmacy without a prescription. Take it as directed and continue to drink fluids until the nausea passes. Then slowly return to your normal diet.

How Much Activity Is Safe?

- When you go home, rest on the first day.
- Keep your leg elevated when you are sitting or lying.
- **Do NOT put pillows under your knee.**
- If you had a regional block (if your leg has been frozen) it will take about 4 to 12 hours for the feeling to return to normal again. It will feel numb and weak and you will have no control of your leg. While it feels this way, protect it from being bumped or hurt.
- Do NOT use your leg or put weight on it until all the feeling and strength has come back.

Important to Know

If the numbness or tingling in your leg has not gone away 24 hours after your surgery, **call your surgeon or call (416) 340-3155** and ask to speak to the Orthopedic Resident on call, or go to the nearest hospital emergency department.

When the numbness is gone:

- Slowly go back to doing your regular activities, as you are able to.
- Walk with your crutches or walker and you can put full weight on your operated leg. If you have never used crutches before, follow the instructions in the “How to Use Crutches” pamphlet.
- Bend your knee in the ‘Jones dressing’ as you are able to.
- Begin physiotherapy after your surgery, as instructed by your surgeon. It will be arranged for you in the follow-up clinic if it hasn’t already been set for you.
- Do NOT do any strenuous activities, exercises or sports until your surgeon tells you it is safe.
- Your surgeon will tell you when it is safe for you to return to work, do sports and drive a vehicle.



How to Use Your Brace

- If you have returned from your surgery with a Range of Motion (ROM) brace, wear it at all times. Your doctor or the orthopedic technician will decide what the range of motion will be. **Do NOT change it. Do not move your leg beyond the ROM you have in the brace.**
- You may only remove the brace to change your dressing or to wash your leg.
- If the brace was not put on in the operating room, it will be put on in the clinic in the next few days as instructed by your surgeon. Bring your **own** brace to the clinic to have it put on.

How to Take Care of Your Wound

- Keep your dressing clean and dry at all times.
- Your dressing will be removed in the clinic as instructed by your surgeon.

If you remain in hospital after your surgery and the dressing was not removed:

- Remove it 3 days after you leave the hospital.
- Apply band-aids to the incision if it has stitches.
- Your stitches will be removed in 7 to 10 days.
- If you have steri-strips (white strips), leave them in place for 7 to 10 days. If they begin to fall off earlier, remove them and throw them away.
- Keep your operation site clean and dry at all times.

Cold therapy

Using cold therapy is very important after surgery. It will help to bring down your pain and swelling.

- Place a cold compress or ice pack around your knee 3 to 5 times every day for 20 minutes.
- **Do not use heat packs on your operated knee.**

When Can You Shower?

- You can shower 2 days after your surgery.
- **Do NOT get your dressing wet.** Before you shower, wrap your leg in plastic. Your leg has to be wrapped in plastic until the dressing has been removed.
- When the dressing has been removed, you no longer have to wrap your leg.
- Your brace can be removed for showering.
- **Do NOT take baths** until instructed by your surgeon.

How To Cope With Your Pain

Pain is normal after this operation and should get better with time.

- We will give you a prescription for pain medication. Take it to a pharmacy to get it filled and follow the directions for taking it. As soon as you feel pain, take the medication. Do not wait until the pain becomes too severe. You can take the pain medication every 4 hours for the first 24 hours if you are feeling pain.
- As the pain becomes less and less, slowly decrease your pain medication until you no longer need any medication at all.
- We will also give you a prescription for the swelling (called an anti-inflammatory). Fill it at a pharmacy and follow the directions for taking the medication.
- Do not drink alcohol while taking these medications.
- Do not drive a car, operate machinery or do anything that needs your full attention. These prescription drugs can cause drowsiness.
- Pain medications can make you constipated. To prevent constipation, drink lots of fluids (3 to 5 glasses of water every day; each glass should be about 8 oz.). If you have not had a bowel movement for 72 hours, take Milk of Magnesia and follow the directions on the bottle. You can buy this from your pharmacy without a prescription.

Pain Pump

- If you have been sent home on a pain pump, follow the instructions given to you by the doctor.

Problems to Watch For

Call your surgeon, or call (416) 340-3155 and ask to speak to the Orthopedic Resident on call or go to the nearest hospital emergency department if the following happens:

Abnormal bleeding that won't stop

- Bleeding that soaks through the dressing that will not stop even after applying pressure for 15 minutes

Swelling

- Your lower calf becomes swollen and painful
- Your toes feel cool
- There is a change in the colour of your foot or knee
- You have less feeling in your foot, or you can't move your toes

Fever

- If you have a temperature higher than 38°C or 101°F
- Increased redness, pain or swelling where the wound is
- Yellowish, bad-smelling fluid coming from the wound

Severe pain

- Severe pain that doesn't get better when you take the medication that was prescribed. Have the phone number of your pharmacy ready when you call because the doctor might want to call your pharmacy to change your prescription.

Follow-up Appointment

Your surgeon will see you in the Fracture Clinic. If you don't already have a follow-up appointment, please call the Fracture Clinic at (416) 603-5858 to make one. Bring your blue card and OHIP card to your appointment.

Doctor: _____ Telephone# _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

Location: _____

Special Instructions for you

For more information
visit our Website at
www.uhn.ca