

Anterior Cruciate Ligament Surgery

Before and After Surgery Information



General Information

Your doctor has scheduled you for surgery to reconstruct your Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL).

Reconstruction of the ligament involves using a graft to replace the damaged ligament. Your doctor will perform the surgery by making small incisions in the knee and placing an instrument in the knee to fix the damaged ligament. The goal of the surgery is to make your knee stable and strong enough to do your normal activities.

Before Your Surgery

Prepare for your surgery by doing these steps before your scheduled procedure.

Surgery checklist:

- View online [EMMI](#) program
- Prepare your home for safety
- Pick up your crutches from Dept. 148 and bring to the hospital
- Purchase ice packs
- Have extra pillows for knee support
- Pick up prescribed pain medicine
- Arrange for a ride home after surgery

Learn more about your procedure by viewing our online [EMMI](#) video, ACL Reconstruction. This can be accessed through your Orthopedic doctor's homepage. Search kp.org/mydoctor to locate your doctor's homepage. If you have any questions about your surgery, please discuss them with your doctor.

Day of Surgery

- ✓ Do not eat or drink anything after midnight the night before your surgery.
- ✓ Make arrangements to have someone drive you home once you are discharged from your surgery.
- ✓ Be sure to take any medication prescribed by your doctor.

After Your Surgery

- ✓ Use your crutches while walking. Your doctor will let you know how much body weight to put on your operated leg.
- ✓ Keep activity to a minimum 3-5 days after surgery; however, get up and move around every 2 hours for 15-30 minutes.
- ✓ Ice your knee for 15-20 minutes several times a day. Use a thin towel or t-shirt under the ice pack to protect your skin.
- ✓ Lie down with your leg elevated above your heart; use pillows lengthwise to support the knee for up to 2 hours at a time.
- ✓ Perform knee exercises 3-5 times per day, starting on the day of surgery.
- ✓ Use a knee brace and ace wrap as ordered by your doctor.
- ✓ Physical therapy will start within 1 week after surgery and will help you gain range of motion and strength to get you back to your normal activities.

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Knee Exercises

Start these knee exercises 3-5 times per day, starting on the day of surgery. You should expect to feel a gentle stretch while performing your exercises.

Quadriceps set

While sitting on the floor, place a small towel roll under your operated knee. Straighten your knee by tightening your thigh muscles. Press the back of your knee into the floor or towel. Hold 5-10 seconds, repeat 10 times, 3-5 times per day.



Ankle pumps

Move your ankle up and down or in circles to increase blood flow to your lower leg. This exercise helps prevent blood clots and lowers swelling by using your calf muscle. Repeat 50-100 times every 1-2 hours.



Heel slides

While lying on your back, slide the heel of your operated leg towards your buttocks until you feel a gentle pull or tightness in your knee. Use a towel or your hands underneath your knee for support. Hold for 5 seconds, repeat 10 times, 3-5 times per day.



Seated knee bend

Sit on the edge of a chair with the operated foot on the floor. Slide the foot backwards until you feel a stretch across the front of the knee. Hold for 5 seconds, repeat 10 times, 3-5 times per day.

