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**LIGAMENT/TENDON/CARTILAGE RECONSTRUCTION**

*PATIENT EDUCATION FORM*

**ACTIVITY:**

* The most important thing you can do to aid recovery is to be **up and moving around**. Do this within your restrictions. Ankle pumps helps blood flow to the legs, avoiding blood clots.
* You may have a brace postoperatively. This serves to protect your ligament reconstruction or a simultaneous soft tissue repair.
* If you have a brace, you will either walk peg legged with the brace locked in full extension or set to a predetermined setting and with the aid of assistive device. If the brace is locked, when you are seated and non-weight bearing, you may unlock the brace to the surgeon’s settings (pre-set, not to go past 90 degrees). Wean from crutches/cane as instructed.
* If you do not have a brace, you may **bear weight as tolerated** with an assistive device. **Avoid deep knee flexion** until progression with therapy. Wean from crutches/cane as you tolerate.
* No running until cleared.
* **AVOID** bending, twisting, or stooping.
* **AVOID** sitting or standing for more than 20 to 30 minutes at a time.
* When seated, elevate the operative extremity using pillows above the level of your heart. Place pillows under your heel, not under your knee.
* If given a brace, this will be **worn for 4 to 6 weeks** after surgery until cleared.
* You may resume sexual activity when you feel ready.
* You may drive an automatic transmission vehicle when you feel you can tolerate it. This is around 1-2 weeks after surgery, and you **should not be taking any narcotics**. If there any questions regarding weight bearing, activity, or driving, ask your surgeon.
* You surgeon will discuss your return to work at your follow-up appointment if earlier arrangements have not been made.

**INCISIONS:**

* For portal (small poke hole) sites you may uncover these incisions **3 days after surgery**. Some drainage is normal and expected. You may shower with these sites uncovered. Place dry gauze and tape over these incisions to prevent irritation with clothing or brace.
* For open incision sites, keep these **covered with surgical dressings** until seen in clinic.
* Gauze and tape can be obtained from your local pharmacy.
* Your incision will be closed with sutures or staples. Many sutures do not need to be removed. If you have staples or removable sutures these will be removed at your first follow up appointment.
* Keep your incision **clean and dry at all times**. If protecting a large surgical site dressing you may either sponge bathe or use a cast bag to protect the extremity. When showering keep your incisions away from the stream of water. No bathing or soaking incision. No swimming in hot tubs, pools, lakes, oceans, etc. If soiled, dressings should be changed daily.
* Do **NOT** put ointments or creams on or by your incisions.
* As your incisions heal, they may itch but do **NOT** scratch them.
* Often times you may get swelling directly under or adjacent to your incisions. As long as there is no redness, drainage, or significant tenderness, this will likely resolve. Watch the area for changes. No pools or hot tubs until cleared by your surgeon.