

# Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL) Surgery

## After Visit Summary

This is general information. Please see your After Visit Summary for how to take care of yourself after surgery.

Your health care team will work with you to understand any challenges you have after your hospital stay. This will help your team work toward a plan to make sure you have the right care and support to help manage your health after you leave the hospital.

## Your Surgery

Anterior cruciate ligament (known as ACL) surgery is done to fix the ligament in your knee. A ligament is a band of tough tissue that connects your knee bones. The surgery will be done on the inside of your knee.

## Before the Surgery

- Tell your health care provider if you:
  - are pregnant
  - have a latex allergy
  - have diabetes
  - take a blood-thinner medicine.
- Remove any jewelry or piercings.
- Arrange to have someone drive you home. You will not be able to drive after the surgery.

## Pain Relief

- Take any prescription or over-the-counter medicine as directed.
- For the first 48 hours, you may place an ice pack or bag of frozen vegetables on your knee for pain relief and to help keep the swelling down.
  - Wrap the bag in a light towel before using.
  - Keep the ice pack on for 30 minutes and then keep it off for 30 minutes.

## Activity

- Your health care provider will tell you when it's OK for you to shower, drive, return to work, exercise, lift, and have sex.
- Alternate rest with activity.
- Avoid tobacco and secondhand smoke. They can slow your recovery.

## Incision Care

- Keep your leg elevated (raised) higher than your heart for the first 48 to 72 hours.
- Wear a knee brace or immobilizer as directed.

## Food and Beverages

- Eat well-balanced meals.  
Follow any instructions your health care provider gave you.
- Drink more liquids.
- Avoid alcohol while you are taking prescription pain medicine.

## When To Call Your Health Care Provider

Call your health care provider if you:

- have a temperature of 101 F or higher
- have new pain or pain you can't control
- have bleeding that won't stop
- have a tender or painful calf
- have any sensations in your knee, such as new numbness or tingling

- have signs of infection at your incision site:
  - pain
  - swelling
  - redness
  - odor
  - warmth
  - green or yellow discharge
- are unable to get out of bed
- have nausea (upset stomach) or vomiting (throwing up) that won't stop
- have any questions or concerns.

## Follow-up Appointment

Please keep all follow-up appointments with your health care provider or specialist, even if you are feeling well.