



**What to Expect after ACL Surgery**  
**Andrea Saterbak, MD**

- 1. You will have a straight leg immobilizer after surgery**
  - a. You will receive a smaller brace at your first post op visit
- 2. You will start physical therapy (PT) the day after surgery**
  - a. Drain pull
  - b. Incision inspection and dressing change
- 3. You will be able to bear weight with the aide of crutches**
  - a. 4 point gait
- 4. Swelling:**
  - a. Very common after surgery
  - b. Elevate leg above your heart
  - c. Ice at least 5-6 times a day (20 minutes on 1 hour off)
  - d. Compression
    - i. Ace wrap
    - ii. Compression sleeve
  - e. Ankle pumps (while leg is elevated, repeatedly point and flex the foot)
    - i. This pushes swelling out of the leg and back into the lymph system
  - f. Swelling will come and go through out recovery
- 5. There will be post surgical pain**
  - a. Read through the pain management handout
  - b. Ice and elevation work hand in hand with narcotic medication for pain relief
- 6. Wound management:**
  - a. Keep steri strips on
  - b. Keep covered with non adherent gauze pad
  - c. Call if the following arise
    - i. Increase in redness

- ii. Warmth to the touch
- iii. Drainage
- iv. Increase in pain for no reason
- v. Fever above 101 degrees

**7. Showering:**

- a. You can shower 2-3 days after surgery
- b. Do not scrub incisions
- c. Let water run over incisions
- d. Pat dry
- e. Do not take steri strips off
- f. Cover as needed
- g. If you have sutures, they will be removed at your first post op visit

**8. Driving depends on the following:**

- a. Which leg surgery was on
- b. Must be off narcotic medication during the day
- c. Must be able to slam on the breaks
- d. Practice in a parking lot before you go on the roads

**\*If you have any questions or concerns, contact Sarah S at 651-351-2618**