



ACL (Anterior Cruciate Ligament) reconstruction: aftercare advice

Information for patients from Day Surgery

You have had one of your knee ligaments reconstructed. The following advice is to help you understand what you should do and expect in the days and weeks following your surgery.

Can I move around after my surgery?

Yes, you should be able to move around with the use of crutches. You can put some weight on your affected leg but only if you find this comfortable. Before you leave hospital all of your exercises will be given to you by your physiotherapist on a separate leaflet.

How can I manage my pain at home?

- You will experience pain and swelling in your knee after your surgery. The drugs listed below will be prescribed for you to take home and use after your surgery. It is important that these drugs are taken as prescribed.
 - **Ibuprofen** will reduce your inflammation (swelling and redness).
 - **Co-codamol** will help with any pain you are experiencing.
- Please let us know if you are allergic or sensitive to any drugs.
- You may have been given a local anaesthetic during surgery which will help with the pain.

How do I care for my knee at home?

- You may also find ice packs over the area may help with the pain (frozen peas wrapped in a tea towel will work just as well). Place a piece of wet paper towel between your skin and the icepack, to protect your skin. This should only be necessary once or twice an hour if you find it helpful. Use a plastic bag to protect the wound from getting wet. (Remember if you use peas they cannot be refrozen and eaten once you have used them).
- Short regular walks are also encouraged. How far you walk and for how long will depend on how much pain you are experiencing and what advice you have been given by your physiotherapist before leaving hospital.
- Try to elevate (raise) your leg when resting.
- You may have temporary loss of feeling (numbness) in a part of your leg when discharged from hospital. This is normal and feeling should return within 24 hours.



Can I get my dressing wet? How long will it stay on for?

- If you have a waterproof dressing, you can have a shower 48 hours after surgery.
- If waterproof dressings have not been used, you will need to keep your dressing clean and dry for five days after your surgery.
- Your dressings should be left on for seven days. After seven days, you can either remove the dressing yourself or make an appointment with the nurse at your GP surgery, and ask them to remove it for you.

When will my stitches/skin clips be removed?

Any stitches or skin clips should be removed within two weeks, either at your hospital outpatient appointment or at your GP surgery. You will be told where to go before you are discharged from hospital.

Will I have a follow-up appointment?

Yes, normally an outpatient appointment at the hospital will be made for two weeks after your surgery.

Outpatient physiotherapy should start within two weeks – you must attend these sessions as they are very important for your recovery.

When can I return to work?

Returning to work should be discussed with your surgeon and depends on the type of work that you do.

When can I drive again?

You cannot drive home after your surgery. Please make sure you arrange for someone to take you home. You can return to driving once you have been given the all clear by your surgeon or physiotherapist. You must be able to do an emergency stop before driving again.

What if I have any questions or concerns?

If you have any queries (especially if you are getting increasing pain after 48 hours) please do not hesitate to contact Day Surgery on the numbers below or your GP.

- Channel Day Surgery, **William Harvey Hospital**, Ashford
Telephone: 01233 616263 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)
- Canterbury Day Surgery Centre, **Kent and Canterbury Hospital**
Telephone: 01227 783114 (7.30am to 8pm)
Telephone: 07887 687645 (8pm to 7.30am)
- Day Surgery Unit, **Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Hospital**, Margate
Telephone: 01843 234499 (7.30am to 8pm)
Telephone: 07887 651162 (8pm to 7.30am)

This leaflet has been produced with and for patients