

# ACL day of surgery/post-op resource

## **bandage**

Your child's leg will have a soft, cotton dressing covered by an Ace™ bandage.

- Please keep the dressing clean and dry.
- Leave the dressing in place until your first postoperative appointment with your surgeon and/or physical therapist.
- You may reinforce the dressing as needed.
- If you start to notice swelling in the toes, the Ace bandage may be loosened.

## **hinged knee brace**

There will be a hinged knee brace over top of the dressings.

- Keep the knee brace on and locked straight until your first follow-up appointment.
- Please do not adjust the settings at the hinges until seen by your surgeon/physical therapist.

## **ice machine**

There will be a blue ice pack applied over top of the hinged knee brace, and an ice machine will be provided. You will need bags of ice to refill this. Please ensure the tubing is attached to the unit correctly so it does not leak and cause the soft dressing to get wet.

- Run for 15-20 minutes\* to reduce pain and swelling at the knee.  
\*If your child has a nerve catheter in place, do not run the ice machine for more than 10 minutes at a time.
- This can be run once per hour while awake.
- Remove the ice pack at night, so that it does not leak. Do not run the ice machine overnight.

## **pain control**

- If you have a pain ball/nerve catheter, you can use Tylenol (acetaminophen) and Motrin (ibuprofen) for pain control. Rotate Tylenol every 6 hours with Motrin every 6 hours, so that the patient is receiving one of the two medications every 3 hours. You can give the opioid pain medication for increased pain.
- Robaxin may be taken every 8 hours as needed for muscle spasms.
- About 4 days after surgery, your child should be requiring less of the prescription opioid medication and muscle relaxant, and be using over-the-counter medications such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Motrin) for in-between doses.

(continued on reverse)

- A nerve block is used to help with pain management after surgery. Common side effects of the nerve block include a sensation of weakness, heaviness, or numbness/tingling in the affected leg. Your child may not be able to move or feel that area 1-2 days after surgery. These side effects should improve after the nerve block wears off, or the pain ball/nerve catheter is removed.
- If your child has a pain ball/nerve catheter in place:
  - Keep clear bandage in place as long as the tubing is in. If the tubing comes out, it cannot be put back in. Keep the bandage clean and dry. While the tube is in, your child should take a sponge bath only.
  - The catheter is connected by tubing to the pump. The pump gives your child a constant supply of pain medicine. Do not change the pump in any way that could affect the delivery of the medicine.
  - Remove the tubing when the pain service has instructed you to do so. The tube may stay in up to 3 days after surgery.
  - If you have any questions regarding pain/numbness/tingling or about caring for or removing the tubing, please call Cindy Brown, Advanced Practice Nurse for acute pain services, at 937-216-0918.

### **extra tips**

- Elevate the leg above the level of the heart for 2-3 days to reduce swelling and throbbing. When elevating, place a pillow under the calf of the leg, allowing the knee to fall straight and avoiding pressure at the heel.
- Pump the ankle up and down a few times throughout the day to help with circulation and swelling.

### **getting home from the hospital**

Right after surgery, your child will likely be very tired. Due to the use of regional anesthesia (nerve block/nerve catheter), there is a good chance his/her affected leg will be numbed by pain medication. Here are some tips to safely getting home from the hospital.

- Getting in and out of the car: Patients will be more comfortable in the back seat. It is easiest to enter the opposite side of the car, and scoot backwards while someone supports the leg. Fasten seatbelt. Reverse the process to get out of the car.
- Navigating steps: Sit on the steps, using both hands and the unaffected leg to help move up or down one step at a time. It may be helpful for someone to hold the affected leg.
- Using crutches video - Non-weight bearing: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qsNZQLtBzjo>

