Reconstructive surgery of the anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) of the knee

The anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) is the most important ligament supporting the knee. Damage to the ACL usually causes harmful instability of the knee. As a result, pain, symptomatic instability, and swelling may occur when the knee is strained. Therefore, a tear of the ACL requires corrective surgery.

Procedure
The procedure is performed under spinal anaesthesia using keyhole surgery through three small incisions (arthroscopy). In the operation, the damaged ACL is replaced with two tendon grafts acquired from the back of the knee. The graft is attached with screws.

Rehabilitation
The first three months are important for the implantation and strengthening of the graft. Therefore, properly executed after-care and physiotherapy are fundamentally important. Crutches are used for 2–4 weeks to balance walking. Only half body weight is allowed on the knee for two weeks, and after that weight can be borne as the pain allows. The knee may be flexed without restrictions. Moving the ankle and toes is important to avoid deep vein thrombosis.

Wound care
The dressings may be removed after 24 hours, after which you may shower. Elastic bandage may be used for approximately a week to support the knee. The sutures are removed after 10–14 days at your health centre, occupational health centre, or health clinic (neuvola) (date ______/______). You may go to sauna 24 hours after the removal of the sutures.

Treatment of pain
Regular pain relief medication, elevated position, elastic bandage, and ice pack therapy efficiently reduce swelling and pain after the operation, contributing to the recovery. It is recommended that you take pain killers regularly for 3–4 days and after that when necessary:

Paracetamol

Anti-inflammatory

Strong painkiller

Other medication

Follow-up visit is with the physician after 3–4 weeks and after 3 months. Follow up visits with the physiotherapist are after 2 and 4 weeks, as well as 3, 6, and 12 months.

Sick leave is approximately 7 weeks.

Contact us
If you experience inflammatory symptoms (increasing pain, heavy swelling, warmth, redness, continuous wound discharge) or other problems in the knee, contact your health centre or treating unit.

Day Surgery Unit on working days from 07.00–17.00 tel. (06) 213 1552
Emergency Department at other times tel. (06) 213 1310
Your own health centre or occupational health centre

• This instruction is intended for our patients who are in a care relationship •