

Foot and Ankle Surgery Post Operative Instructions

What to expect:

- Temporary numbness or tingling (usually resolved after the first few days. May be longer)
- Pain at the operative site. (The degree of pain depends on the type of surgical procedure)
- Throbbing when the leg is hanging down (example: when sitting in a chair)
- Bruising and swelling to the toes and discoloration and swelling to the toes
- Drowsiness, especially if taking any narcotic medication.

General:

- **ELEVATE** your foot. Expect swelling after foot surgery. The best way to counteract this is to elevate your surgical foot to reduce swelling, and thus reduce pain. Lie on your back and elevate your legs on 2-3 pillows. After 3-4 days, elevate as needed for swelling.
- Apply ice to the ankle 3-4 times a day (20 minutes on/20 minutes off) for the first week or until the swelling subsides. **DO NOT APPLY ICE DIRECTLY TO THE SKIN.** If you are in a splint, apply the ice on top of the splint or cast or behind the knee.
- Ambulate with crutches for stability until your first follow up appointment – you may bear weight as instructed prior to surgery.

Activities:

- After discharge from the hospital or surgery center, go directly home.
- Rest the remainder of the day and limit activities.
- Limit your walking until follow up with your doctor.
- Do not bear weight on the surgical site unless you were advised otherwise.
- Use crutches, walker, or knee scoot as instructed.
- Do not drive for 24 hours after surgery or while on pain medication.
- No driving with the surgical foot unless it was cleared by your surgeon.

Diet:

- Gradually advance your diet from liquids to light meals after surgery.
- There are no dietary restrictions and you can resume regular diet as tolerated.

Wound Care:

- **DO NOT CHANGE YOUR DRESSING** unless instructed otherwise. This will be done at the office. **KEEP YOUR CAST OR DRESSING DRY.** If you need to shower, protect the cast/dressing with an extremity shower guard or cast cover (sold in office)
- Bleeding is expected and your bandage may have strikethrough bleeding. If bandage becomes soaked with blood, please contact the office.

Medications: (always take with food)

- You will be discharged with a prescription for pain medicine.
- You may use Tylenol as needed for milder pain instead of the prescribed medication, or you may supplement the prescribed medicine with ibuprofen 600mg every 6 hours. Do not exceed 3,000mg of Tylenol in one day.
- Pain medications can be constipating. You may use over-the-counter laxative or stool softener (Colace, Metamucil, Milk of Magnesia, etc.) as needed until your bowel function returns to normal.
- We recommend taking pain medication with food.

Exercises:

- Ankle pumps and circles (if you are able) 25 times each per hour, while awake.
- Straight leg raises: Try to raise your affected leg a few inches off the bed with the knee straight.
- Hold it for 5 seconds then rest. Start with 5-10 repetitions, working up to 20. Do this three times daily.

Follow-up Appointment:

- Please make sure your post-op appointment is made for 10-14 days after your surgery. If not, please call the office to schedule.
- Please call if you have any problems, questions, or concerns. If you need to reach me during business hours, please call the office and leave a message. If you need to reach us after-hours or on the weekend, the answering service will contact me and someone will return your call as soon as possible.

When to call:

Please notify us of any of the following symptoms. Call our office anytime. If your symptoms are increasing suddenly and you do not hear from us right away, report to the nearest emergency room for evaluation and treatment.

- Increasing drainage from the incisions.
- Increasing redness.
- Foul odor.
- Increasing swelling accompanied by pain.
- Fever over 101 degrees (take your temperature twice to ensure accuracy).
- Increasing pain not relieved with rest, elevation, ice and the pain medication.
- Coldness, numbness or a sustained blue color to your extremity.
- Sudden onset of calf pain.
- Sudden onset of shortness of breath.
- Chest pain.