

Post Op Instructions: Ankle Arthroscopy

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PLEASE READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS COMPLETELY AND ASK FOR CLARIFICATION IF NECESSARY - DIRECT QUESTIONS TO YOUR NURSE BEFORE LEAVING THE SURGERY CENTER OR VIA PHONE/EMAIL TO OUR STAFF AFTER ARRIVING HOME

WOUND CARE

- To avoid infection, keep surgical incisions clean and dry. After 48 hours, you may remove the dressings but keep SteriStrips that are on the skin. After 48 hours, you may shower. NO immersion of operative leg (i.e. bath). Do not rub over the wound.

MEDICATIONS

- Pain medication is injected into the wound and ankle joint during surgery – this will wear off within 8-12 hours.
- You can begin the prescription pain medication provided to you upon arriving home and continue every 4-6 hours as needed for pain.
- Most patients will require some narcotic pain medication for a short period of time – this can be taken as per the directions on the bottle.
- Common side effects of the pain medication are nausea, drowsiness, and constipation – to decrease the side effects, take medication with food – if constipation occurs, consider taking an over-the-counter laxative such as Dulcolax or Colace.
- If you are having problems with nausea and vomiting, contact the office to possibly have your medication changed (1-800-974-5633)
- Do not drive a car or operate machinery while taking narcotic medication.
- Ibuprofen 200-600mg (i.e. Advil) may be taken in between the narcotic pain medication to help smooth out the post-operative ‘peaks and valleys’, reduce the overall amount of pain medication required, and increase the time intervals between narcotic pain medication usage.

ACTIVITY

- Elevate the operative leg to chest level whenever possible to decrease swelling.
- Use crutches to assist with walking – use a heel-toe pattern when walking, but do NOT bear any weight on your operative leg – unless instructed otherwise by the physician.
- Do not engage in activities that increase ankle pain/swelling (prolonged periods of standing/walking) over the first 7-10 days following surgery.
- Avoid long periods of sitting (without leg elevated) or long-distance traveling for 2 weeks.
- NO driving until instructed otherwise by the physician.
- Air travel is permitted 14 days after surgery. Air travel and immobility increase the risk of blood clots. Unless you have been previously instructed to avoid aspirin products for medical reasons or you are under age 16, ensure that you are taking 81 mg baby aspirin twice daily beginning the day after surgery to minimize the risk of blood clot.

ICE THERAPY

- Beginning immediately following surgery, use the ice machine (when prescribed as directed for the first 2-3 days following surgery. Ice at your discretion thereafter.
- When using “real” ice, avoid direct skin contact > 20 mins to prevent damage/frostbite of the skin. Check the skin frequently for excessive redness, blistering, or other signs of frostbite. When using the ice machine, it is okay to ice continuously as long as you check the skin frequently.

EXERCISE

- The ankle and foot range of motion may begin immediately unless otherwise instructed by your physician.
- Formal physical therapy (PT) will begin about 10-14 days post-operatively with a description provided at your first post-operative visit.

DIET

- Begin with clear liquids and light foods (Jello, soup, etc.).
- Progress to your normal diet unless you are nauseated.

APPOINTMENT

- Your postoperative appointment will be made prior to surgery. You will receive a reminder from the office prior to the visit. This will be 10-14 days after surgery at your surgeon's office.

****EMERGENCIES****

Contact the practice hotline at 1-800-974-5633 if any of the following are present:

- Unrelenting pain, despite taking medications as prescribed.
- Fever (over 101°). It is normal to have a low-grade fever following surgery.
- Continuous drainage or bleeding from incisions (a small amount of drainage is expected)
- Difficulty breathing
- Excessive nausea/vomiting uncontrolled

DO NOT CALL THE HOSPITAL OR SURGICENTER FOR EMERGENCIES IF YOU HAVE A NEED THAT REQUIRES IMMEDIATE ATTENTION, PROCEED TO THE NEAREST EMERGENCY ROOM