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Discharge Instructions Foot and Ankle Surgery

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These instructions are to compliment the information given by the nursing staff.
They cover many of the common questions.

Today: Go directly home and lie down after surgery.

Elevation:

Swelling to some degree is common after surgery. To reduce swelling and promote comfort, elevation is very helpful. Elevate the foot/ankle above the level of the heart, using several pillows, for at least 14 days after surgery. Do not place pillows directly behind the knee. Elevation for 30 minutes every 2 hours is a good initial recommendation. Excess pain and swelling should be reported to your physician.

Ice:

Apply an ice pack to the ankle / behind knee for 15-20 min, 2-3 times per day for 14 days.
Do not leave this on for longer than 20 minutes. Do not apply any form of heat to the area.

Restrictions:

- ** Limit walking _____
- ** No walking _____
- ** Surgical shoe/cast _____

Pain Medications:

Have prescription(s) filled immediately and take medication(s) as directed. Be sure to eat before taking pain medication. Avoid alcoholic beverages while on pain medications. Narcotic pain medications can cause constipation and you may want to use an over the counter stool softener. Many narcotic pain medications contain Tylenol so it is not recommended using Tylenol while on narcotic medications. You may supplement your pain medication by using ibuprofen or Aleve for any breakthrough pain. Please notify your physician for any medication intolerance or allergic reactions as discussed by your pharmacist.

Exercises:

Begin flexion/extension of right/left knee and hip within 24 hours. Your goal is 20 repetitions three times per day at each joint, until instructed otherwise.

If you have a splint the following instructions are to be followed:

When elevating the foot/ankle put two pillows behind the level of the calf to suspend the heel freely.

Driving:

To drive you must no longer be taking narcotic pain medications. (Plain Tylenol is allowed.) Also, any weight bearing restrictions of the operative extremity must be followed.

Wound Care:

Dressings are to be kept clean, dry, and intact. Do not tamper with the dressing. A small amount of clear drainage or bleeding is normal. Appearance of a blood spot through the dressing is not unusual. However, if there is active bleeding (bright red blood of large amounts) and persistent bleeding, elevate, and ice and call your surgeon immediately.

When to seek medical attention:

Call 911 right away if you experience any of the following:

- *Chest pain
- *Shortness of breath

Otherwise, call you doctor immediately if you have any of the following:

- Your splint, cast or dressing has become wet.
- Swelling in the foot, ankle, or calf that is not relieved by elevating the foot.
- Painful calf that is tender and warm to the touch
- Fever above 101° or shaking/chills
- Increased pain with or without activity
- Drainage, redness, or warmth at the incision
- Opening of the incision
- Cool toes, dark nail beds (increased swelling, numbness, tingling or blue discoloration)

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