

Post-op Instructions for Ankle Surgery

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

WOUND CARE

Dressings are to be kept clean and dry. A small amount of clear drainage or bleeding is normal. If the ace wrap feels too tight, you may loosen it and re-wrap it.

If a splint is present, it should remain on until you follow-up in the clinic with your surgeon.

When showering, please place a plastic bag over the leg up to the thigh and secure it with tape, or wrap your ankle with Glad Press & Seal plastic wrap. Pat the ankle dry immediately with a clean towel if it does get slightly wet. As an alternative, you may perform sponge baths.

Never, ever remove your own stitches or trim what may appear to be excess suture material. We will remove your stitches in the office at your post-op appointment. If you are concerned about your stitches or if they are bothering you, please call us.

PAIN & SWELLING

To lessen pain and swelling, you should ice after surgery. Place a large amount of ice in a zip lock bag or towel and place over the surgical site. We recommend 20 minutes, 5-10 minutes per day. Do not place ice or cooling devices directly on the skin for prolonged periods of time as it may damage the skin.

Narcotic pain medication will be prescribed for use after you leave the hospital. Try to wean down as tolerated. These medications can cause constipation and you may want to use an over the counter stool softener. Tylenol products may be used instead of the prescribed pain medication. The prescribed narcotic medications should not be taken at the same time as plain Tylenol. You may supplement your pain medication by using Ibuprofen or Aleve for any breakthrough pain. It can help to stagger your pain medication with Ibuprofen or Aleve as needed. If a refill of medication is needed, please call the office during regular business hours, Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. In general, refills will not be made after hours or on weekends, so please plan ahead.

Swelling to some degree is common after surgery but often causes pain. To reduce swelling, elevation is very helpful. Elevate the foot above the heart level for the first 2-5 days after surgery. Elevation for at least 30 minutes every 2 hours is a good initial recommendation. Longer periods of elevation, when possible, will further improve your swelling. Excessive pain and swelling should be reported to your surgeon.

EXERCISES

Crutches and the splint are required following surgery. You should not put weight on the surgical leg until otherwise instructed by your physician. Your splint should be left on at all times.

DRIVING

To drive you must no longer be taking narcotic pain pills (plain Tylenol is allowed). Also, you must feel strong and alert.

FOLLOW-UP

Make sure an appointment has been scheduled for you at Chippewa Valley Orthopedics & Sports Medicine for approximately 2 weeks after surgery.

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