



GLACIER FOOT AND ANKLE ASSOCIATES

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POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

The following instructions are general guidelines intended to help insure optimal surgical results. Please follow all prescribed post operative instructions in order to minimize pain and swelling, reduce potential complications and insure good healing. Minimize all activity for the first 48-72 hrs after surgery.

DO NOT EAT OR DRINK 8 HOURS PRIOR TO SURGERY AS INSTRUCTED. WEAR LOOSE FITTING ATTIRE TO FIT OVER BULKY DRESSINGS.

- Keep the surgical dressing clean and dry. Do not remove the bandages yourself. You may loosen the bandages if they become too tight due to swelling and cause excessive pain.
- Stay off your feet. Avoid prolonged walking or standing. While sitting, elevate the foot. If the foot begins to throb, it may indicate swelling due to excess activity; lie down and elevate the leg above heart level for 15 - 30 minutes several times per day. Be sure to support underneath your knee with a pillow.
- To reduce the potential for a blood clot - exercise the leg to stimulate blood flow - bend the knee and move the leg for about 5 minutes each hour. *Patients at risk for a DVT (deep venous thrombosis) should take additional preventive measures and need to discuss this with their surgeon pre-operatively.* Notify your surgeon immediately if you experience any sudden calf / leg pain or chest pain / shortness of breath.
- It is important to get plenty of rest. Get help from family or friends. Drink plenty of fluids and eat well.
- Take post-operative medications as prescribed. If you have any unfavorable side effects, stop taking the medication and contact your surgeon.
- Take medications with food. Do not drink alcohol or drive while taking narcotic pain medications.
- Begin post-op pain medications before excessive pain develops. Due to the use of local anesthetics, the foot/ankle may be numb well into the evening following surgery. Begin the pain medications as soon as the local anesthetic begins to wear off. If the area is still numb when going to bed, begin the medication to stay ahead of the pain and avoid waking up with pain in the middle of the night. Pain usually begins to decrease significantly 24-48 hours after surgery.
- Ambulate only as instructed with a post-op shoe or walking cast. Patients instructed to remain non-weight bearing must stay off the foot entirely using crutches or a walker (practice with crutches / walker before surgery). Be careful with stairs.

**** CALL YOUR SURGEON IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING OCCURS ****

- 1) Bandages become dirty and/or wet - this may lead to infection.
- 2) Your dressing or cast feels too tight, toes become numb or change color – this may lead to nerve or vascular injury.
- 3) If you notice any redness or swelling extending up from the ankle or a painful lump behind your knee or in your groin – this may indicate infection.
- 4) If you begin having fever or chills.
- 5) Notify your surgeon immediately if you should experience any sudden calf / leg pain – this may indicate a blood clot. If you experience sudden chest pain or shortness of breath, present to your nearest Emergency Room. A serious blood clot is actually more likely to occur a couple weeks after a surgery than in the immediate post-operative period.

Call Glacier Foot and Ankle Associates at 755-1300 if you have ANY problems or concerns at any time.