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Post Operative Instructions Following Ankle Arthroscopy

1. WHEN DO I COME IN FOR MY FIRST FOLLOW-UP VISIT?

If an appointment has not already been scheduled, please call the office the day following surgery to schedule an appointment for approximately one week after your surgery.

2. WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT AFTER SURGERY?

After arthroscopy, it is normal to experience some discomfort. You should have received a prescription from the nursing staff at the hospital. Please fill the prescription and use the medication regularly as directed for the first twenty-four hours and then as needed after the first day. For minor discomfort, Tylenol may be used **instead** of the prescription medication. If you are able to take NSAIDs (ie. Aleve, Ibuprofen, Motrin, Advil, etc.), you may take these **with** your prescribed pain medication.

A low-grade temperature (99-101 degrees F) is common. Please call the office if your temperature is consistently elevated over 101.5 degrees.

When resting, try to keep the surgical leg elevated for the first two days. Your ankle should be elevated above your heart. This can be done by placing pillows under your knee, calf and foot.

3. WILL I HAVE AN EXERCISE PROGRAM TO FOLLOW?

You will be started on an exercise program to help rehabilitate your ankle when you come to the office for the first post-operative visit. Depending on the findings at surgery and your status at your follow-up visit, either a home program or formal physical therapy at a therapist's office will be prescribed.

4. HOW MANY DAYS SHOULD I USE MY CANE OR CRUTCHES?

Use your cane or crutches as needed. After the third day, it is okay to put weight on your leg. As each day passes, you may find that the cane or crutches are not needed. Feel free to walk without them as tolerated.

5. HOW LONG SHOULD I KEEP MY ANKLE DRY AND WEAR THE BANDAGE?

The bandage should be kept dry and in place for 48 hours. For the first 48 hours, it is best to take baths with your foot hanging out of the tub so that the dressing may remain dry.

Forty-eight hours after surgery, please remove and discard the bandages. There will be several stitches. At this point the stitches may get wet in the shower. Following your shower, pat the stitches dry and place Band-Aids over them. Do not immerse your ankle in water (i.e. swimming, baths, or hot tubs) while the stitches are in place.

6. WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP REDUCE SWELLING AND DISCOMFORT?

Limiting your activities and resting with your ankle elevated above your heart are the best methods of reducing swelling and discomfort and will speed up your recovery. Ice may also be used. This can be done by filling a plastic bag with ice cubes and placing it over your ankle with a towel between the skin and the ice bag. Leave the ice in place for 15-30 minutes. This may be done every hour while awake.

With regard to your activity level, it is best to limit your activity level for the first two days with your ankle elevated above your heart and limit weightbearing on the operative side. As your discomfort decreases, use common sense as your guide. Advance your daily activities as tolerated. Painful activities are to be avoided.

7. WHAT EFFECTS MIGHT I NOTICE FROM THE ANESTHESIA?

If you had general anesthesia, some fatigue and lethargy may be noticeable for a day or two. Occasionally, nausea may occur. Eating light foods will help. Resume your regular diet as the nausea resolves.

If you had a block, soreness in the area of injection is common. Ice to this area is helpful in reducing discomfort. Apply it for 15-30 minutes three times a day. The soreness should resolve by three to four days following the surgery. If, by that time, it has not resolved or it is getting worse, please call our office or call the hospital and ask for the anesthesia office.