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Post Operative Instructions Following Ankle ORIF

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 ankle surgery, 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. Please do not use NSAIDs (ie. Advil, Aleve, Motrin, Ibuprofen, etc.) until you have been told that your fracture has healed.

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

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

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

The splint and bandage should be kept dry until it is removed in our office. It is best to take baths with your foot hanging out of the tub so that the dressing may remain dry.

4. 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. However, it is unlikely that its effect will be able to penetrate the splint. If tried, this can be done by filling a plastic bag with ice cubes and placing it over your ankle. 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 activities for the first three days with your ankle elevated above your heart. As your discomfort decreases, use common sense as your guide. Advance your daily activities as able, however weightbearing on the operative ankle and foot is **not** permitted.

5. MUST I USE CRUTCHES?

If you did not bring your own, crutches should have been provided for you at the hospital. Please use these as instructed. You should not put any weight on your operative foot and ankle while standing and walking.

6. WILL I BE GETTING A CAST?

When you come to the office for your initial postoperative visit, your splint and sutures will be removed and an x-ray will be taken and a cast or a boot that extends from below your knee to your toes will be applied.

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.