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POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR ANKLE ORIF

Activities No walking on the foot is permitted until 6 weeks after surgery. At that time you will be allowed to walk in a walking boot. It will take about 3 months before the ankle starts to feel comfortable. Ankle swelling will generally persist for about 9-12 months. It is important to elevate the ankle above the heart as often as possible for the days following surgical fixation.

Dressing: After surgery, a cast splint will be placed on your leg and ankle. Make every effort to keep the incision clean and dry.

Showering: You may shower by covering the ankle with saran wrap or with a plastic bag by taping it securely to the top to prevent moisture from soaking the bandages or wounds. Never allow your incision to get wet until it is healed as this may predispose you to developing an infection.

Medication: Although you have a prescription for strong pain medication, many patients are able to handle the discomfort post operatively with a milder pain medication such as extra strength Tylenol. We prefer that you avoid aspirin containing medications in the immediate post operative period as these can increase the tendency for bleeding, unless you are prescribed these for another medical condition.

RETURNING TO WORK OR SCHOOL: You may return to work (sedentary) or school 1-2 weeks after surgery if pain is tolerable. Returning to heavy labor will be determined by Dr. Wert.

NORMAL SENSATIONS AND FINDINGS AFTER SURGERY:

- a. Shin pain
- b. ankle swelling and warmth up to 3 weeks
- c. Small amount of bloody drainage
- d. Numbness to incision area
- e. Soreness and swelling to the calf.
- f. Bruising to lower leg (black and blue appearance)
- g. Lower leg swelling including the ankle. If this occurs, elevate the leg above the heart and apply ice to swollen area.
- h. Numbness to the foot – will resolve in a few days
- i. Low-grade temperature less than 101.5 degrees – if this occurs, drink plenty of fluids and cough and deep breathe (take 10 breaths, on the last hold for a second then forcefully cough a few times). A low-grade temperature is normal for a week after surgery.

NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IMMEDIATELY IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SIGNS OR SYMPTOMS OCCUR DURING YOUR RECOVERY:

- a. Change is noted to your incision (i.e. increased redness or drainage)
 - b. Sharp pains in the back of your calf (especially when you pull your toes back toward your nose)
 - c. Temperature greater than 101.5 degrees
 - d. Fever, chills, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
 - e. Sutures become loose or fall out and incision becomes open
 - f. Drainage becomes yellow, pus-like, or foul-smelling
 - g. Increased pain unrelieved by medication
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