

BUNION (HALLUX VALGUS) POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

- You will be in a splint for the first one or two weeks after surgery.
- Bleeding through the dressing is normal. Please leave the surgical dressing on until you see us after surgery. Expect some reddish staining of the splint near the surgical site.
- Reinforce the splint with ACE wrap as needed.
- No weight may be put on the leg during the first one to two weeks. You may use crutches and the other leg to get around.
- Elevate the leg on 2-3 pillows as much as possible.
- Ice helps with swelling and pain.
- Protect the dressing from getting wet.
- Swelling may persist for at least a year in some way.
 - ▶ On the first post-op visit, we will remove the splint.
 - ▶ You will be taught a special dressing technique for your wound at this time. This is called 'Strapping'. Strapping is extremely important for you to do every day for 6 weeks. You will train the toe to stay in the new position with this technique.
 - ▶ You will be put into a walking boot at two weeks. You may walk as much as you like at this point, as long as you do not have pain at the surgical site. You will be able to feel how much walking is too much by pain. Pain in the foot region means you are putting too much weight on it for too long.
 - ▶ At the second visit (around 2-3 weeks after surgery), we will remove stitches. We will also be able to order a brace (bunion splint) for you so that you may sleep in the brace.
- Therapy will start at 4-6 weeks after surgery if we feel it is necessary in your specific case. This decision will be made during one of your post-op visits.
- Therapy will be very gentle for the first two weeks and at 4-6 weeks after surgery, the therapy will become harder and you will do more activity.
- During therapy, as you get stronger, you will go from the boot to a regular shoe for walking. If you do not participate in a therapy program, you will wean yourself to a shoe over time.
- Weaning = use a regular shoe only a little bit at a time, gradually increasing time spent in the shoe until you don't use the boot at all.
- At week 2-4 you may sleep in the brace and if brake reaction time is OK, you may drive in the brace; however, you still need the boot for walking.
- You might want to practice driving in a parking lot before getting on the road in traffic. This is also something your therapist may help you with. I will not be able to fully assess your ability to drive of course, but usually around this time patients are able to do so safely. You may drive once your brake reaction time is adequate, a brace should be worn and the boot should be put back on once you leave the vehicle.

Typically, you will still need a light strapping, even in regular shoes, to protect the soft-tissue work. Some people require bunion taping for a long time after surgery. Bunion taping is something that we can show you. This is similar to turf-toe taping seen in the NFL.

- ▶ Vitamin E capsules may be crushed and applied to the wound to improve the scar. Alternatively, you may use lotion containing Vitamin E, Cocoa Butter, and Aloe Vera and massage 3 - 4 times per day after the wound is completely healed. This can be purchased at Wal-Mart or other stores.
- ▶ Keeping the scars covered with antibiotic ointment and a bandage can reduce the size of the scar also.
- ▶ Vitamins C (5000 mg), D3 (4000 I.U.), and calcium (1200mg) daily in divided doses, will assist in your healing.
- ▶ Constipation may occur with calcium and pain medication. A high fiber diet and/or Metamucil may also help with constipation. Senokot-S can be purchased over the counter in most drug stores for this problem.

Some people have itching with pain medication. This is usually what is called 'an opioid reaction'. Try Benadryl OTC (25mg) up to three times a day for this or Claritin (OTC) 10mg if the Benadryl makes you too sleepy. If the itching persists, we can switch the pain medication.

For convenience and driving, a post-operative shoe is available for a cash payment

- ▶ Strapping will start after the first post-op visit
 - ▶ We will teach this technique at the first visit
 - ▶ Dressing supplies for this are available at local drug stores
 - ▶ Walking in the boot will continue until about 4-6 weeks after surgery
 - ▶ Regular shoe should be adequate by that time, assuming the films are fine and there is no pain
 - ▶ At week 6, strapping may stop and you can begin to work on the motion of the big toe (if you are not already in therapy).
- Showering is OK once you are out of the initial splint or the casts.
 - Once you are in a boot or brace and you have a wound dressing that is to be changed everyday, we encourage cleaning the incision site with soap and water.
 - Please be gentle and do not scrub this area. Do not soak the wounds in a tub until 2 months after surgery.

- If you do shower, please maintain the weight-bearing status consistent with the time-period you are in. For instance, at week 3 you still might be non-weight bearing. This may require a shower seat (please let us know).
- Dry the wound with a hair dryer on cool or pat dry with a towel. Do not clean wounds with peroxide or alcohol.

DR. WARNER'S POLICY ON NSAID MEDICATION

NSAID = Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs

Aleve, Naproxen, Naprosyn, Ibuprofen, Advil, Motrin, Etc...

DO NOT TAKE NSAIDs UNTIL 6 WEEKS AFTER SURGERY UNLESS I GIVE YOU PERMISSION TO DO SO.

This is very important. Many scientific studies have shown us that this type of medicine dramatically slows down and weakens healing. If you hurt, take your pain medication we prescribed. and elevation. If you have swelling, use ice and elevation.

Thank you and we look forward to a great recovery for you!