

ANKLE FRACTURE FIXATION POST OPERATION INSTRUCTIONS

- You will be in a splint for the first two weeks after surgery. This is bulky and heavy, but important for swelling control.
- Bleeding through the dressing is normal. 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 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 and take out the stitches.
 - ▶ You will be put into a cast or boot, depending upon how the ankle feels and looks, at two weeks. You will still need to avoid putting weight on the ankle/foot that was fixed at this time.
 - ▶ At the second visit (around 4 weeks after surgery), the cast will be changed or removed and we will give you a boot, unless you received a boot at week two.
 - ▶ We will also order a brace for you so that you may sleep in the brace and drive; 6 weeks after your surgery. Until week 6 after surgery, stay in the boot as much as possible.
- Therapy will start at this point, 4-6 weeks after surgery.
- Therapy will be very gentle for the first two weeks (4-6 weeks to 6-8 weeks after surgery). At the 6th or 8th week 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 brace for walking.
- At week 6 you may sleep in the brace and if brake reaction time is OK, you may drive in the brace 1-2 weeks after you have been put into a boot; however, you still need the boot for protection when not in the vehicle.
- We do not recommend operating a vehicle in a boot or cast.
- 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 brace for some time (months) after surgery, to protect the soft-tissue work. Some people require ankle taping for an even longer time after surgery. Ankle taping is something the therapist can show you. This is similar to the ankle 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.

- 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 every day, 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!