

Ronak M. Patel, MD

Ankle Fracture Surgery Post-Operative Instructions

Please bring all post-operative DME to surgical facility the day of surgery (this includes all crutches, braces, slings, polar care machines, etc.)

Diet

- You may resume your regular diet. However, start slow with clear liquids and gradually work your way back to your normal diet. This will help prevent nausea and vomiting.

Wound Care

- Keep the splint/cast on until your visit with Dr. Patel. It must remain absolutely 100% dry so do not get it wet. You can shower, but must keep the cast/splint dry by using a garbage bag or a sponge bath.
- Do not put any lotions or antibiotic ointments over the incisions until they are completely closed.
- Do not submerge your surgical leg or soak in a hot tub, swimming pool, or bath until your incisions have completely healed in approximately 4 weeks.
- Sutures/Staples will be removed at your first post-op visit.

DVT Prevention

- You must wear your white TED hose compressive stocking on your non-operative leg until cleared by Dr. Patel. This stocking helps prevent blood clots.
- Please perform ankle pumps as this will help prevent blood clots.
- **Sometimes we have to prescribe a blood thinner to help prevent blood clots. Given your medical history, surgery and activity level:**
 - **You are recommended to take one 325mg Aspirin daily by mouth for 2-4 weeks after surgery. Do not take Aspirin at the same time as NSAID medications.**
 - **STOP THE ASPIRIN:** If you have any stomach irritation, bleeding in your stool or you start vomiting blood. Contact Dr. Patel's office.
 - **You do not need to take any additional medications**
 - **Other:** _____
- If you are traveling after surgery, please let us know – we advise you to wait at least 1 week between travel and surgery. General tips for preventing blood clots when traveling after surgery:
 1. Get up on the plane to crutch/walk every hour or if driving stop every 1-2 hours to get up and walk
 2. Stay hydrated. Avoid alcohol and caffeine.
 3. Wear your leg stockings
 4. Take 325mg of Aspirin (unless allergic or have stomach or kidney problems) the day before travel, the day of travel and the day after travel

5. Do your exercises during travel especially ankle pumps
6. If you experience swelling in your calf or pain please call our office immediately or go to your local ED for evaluation

Post-operative Activity and Weight Bearing

- Given the extent of your surgery, your weight bearing restrictions are:
 - Non-weight bearing for 6 weeks minimum. Use your crutches during this time.

Leg Elevation

- Place pillows under the ankle/calf only. Do not bunch them directly under the knee. This will help reduce your swelling and allows for full extension of the leg, which is very important.

Cold Therapy

- Ice should be used to help reduce pain and swelling. Use it as often as possible the first 3 days after surgery, alternating 20 minutes on with 20 minutes off. After the third day, use it at least 3 to 5 times a day for 20 minutes each session until pain and swelling have resolved.

Pain Medication

- Take your pain medication as prescribed. This usually means 1 tablet every for 4 hours for mild pain or 2 tablets every 4-6 hours for severe pain. Do not take any additional Tylenol.
- The pain medication may also cause constipation if you take it regularly, so take the prescribed stool softener as needed. Over the counter treatments include: stool softener, fiber bar, Metamucil or prune juice to prevent constipation.
- No driving while taking any narcotic pain medication.
- The pain medication may cause some nausea so take it with some food.

Effective October 6, 2014, federal regulation prevents the ability to call or fax post-operative pain medications to pharmacies (including refills). Every prescription must be an original and presented in person; please keep this in mind when requesting additional medications.

Bone Health

- While fractures can happen for a variety of reasons, sub-optimal bone health can be a risk factor. Taking Vitamin D and Calcium during the duration of your treatment may promote fracture healing. The following are suggested doses and are available over-the-counter: 1000mg Vitamin D by mouth daily and 1000mg Calcium by mouth daily.
- You should schedule an appointment with your primary care doctor and ask about checking your blood Vitamin D levels as well as possible Bone Density testing (DEXA scan).

Nerve Blocks for Anesthesia

If you had a nerve block this can last approximately 12-24 hours, sometimes longer. You may notice tingling on occasion after the block wears off. This usually resolves in several days, but if it persists please call the office.

As you begin to regain your sensation take your pain medication before the block wears completely off. This will help you prevent getting behind on pain control.

Notify the Office if you Experience the Following

- Flu-like symptoms, nausea/vomiting, temperature of 101.5 degrees or higher, severe chills; foul odor, redness, or increased tenderness or drainage from the incision. These are signs of a possible infection. You may need to report to an Emergency Room.
- Hot tender area or unusually large amounts of swelling in either calf or other area of the leg; chest pain, shortness of breath or coughing up blood. These are signs of a possible blood clot and you may need to report to an Emergency Room or call an ambulance.
- **For urgent problems** that occur during office hours (office hours, Monday -- Friday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm), call Dr. Patel's office directly (630) 920-2350 or report to an emergency room. After hours, call (630) 920-2350 or report to an emergency room.

Follow-up

- If you do not have a postoperative appointment with Dr. Patel or his PA set-up already, please call the office to schedule an appointment for 14-21 days after surgery at (630) 920-2350.