



## WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER SURGERY

### For your safety and comfort, please follow these discharge and post-operative instructions.

- For the first two weeks after surgery, you will have a large splint. This splint is very heavy. It is to help control swelling and to keep you from doing anything.
- For the first two weeks after surgery you are in bed or on the couch with your foot elevated above your heart. This is to keep the swelling down. The only time you can get up is to use the bathroom.
- You will need someone to get your meals for you, since you will not be able to get them on your own.
- At your first post-op appointment (**2 weeks after surgery**), we will be taking off your splint. You will also have x-rays and your staples will be removed. (You may want to take pain medication before you come to this appointment).
  - A fiberglass non-weight bearing cast will be put on at this 2-week appointment. It is **extremely important** that the cast does not get wet. If the cast does get wet, you will need to call us immediately. We will need to change the cast. If this happens on the weekend please call the office and they will let the on call doctor know.
  - If the cast starts to feel tight after you leave your appointment, it means your foot or ankle is swollen. You will need to elevate your foot and ankle above your heart in order for the swelling to go down.
  - The cast should not touch the ground. If the cast touches the ground or any weight what-so-ever is placed on the foot or ankle, there is a chance that the bones, screws or plates could displace. If this happened you will need to go back to surgery.
- At your **five-week** appointment your cast will come off and another cast will be put back on. The reason we change the cast is, because the swelling in your foot and ankle has gone down and your cast will become loose.
- At your **eight-week** appointment, we will be taking off your cast and you will have an x-ray to make sure you are healed.
  - If you are healed, you will be walking out of the office with a shoe on. Please bring a supportive sneaker or hiking boot to this appointment.
  - If you are not healed completely, you could be walking out with an aircast walking boot. This is a boot that you will have to wear for weight bearing activities. You will be able to take it off only to go to bed and to take a shower. This will be worn for one month.
- When you start to walk you will have increased pain, swelling and redness. This is all normal. The more you walk, the faster the pain will go away. You need to walk with a normal heel to toe gait. You should get rid of your crutches one week after you start walking.
- If you continue to use your crutches longer than one week, or walk with a limp, or sit down because it hurt too much the pain will last a lot longer than just a couple of weeks. Take pain medication if needed to get through this period of time. You can also elevate and ice at the end of the day to help with the increased swelling.

### Smoking

Smoking decreases of blood flow to the healing area. This can mean that healing will be slower or not occur at all. Smoking increases your chances of getting an infection.

### Weight

Putting weight on your foot could cause your screw, plates or ligaments to displace. If this happens, you would need to go back to surgery to repair it.

### Wet

It is very important not to get your cast wet. The outside of a fiberglass cast will dry, but the inside will sit on your skin macerating it. You could end up with an ulcer of your skin anywhere under the cast. If your incisions get wet, infection could start very quickly. That is why you should call immediately if your cast should become wet.

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