



DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS - ANKLE FRACTURE SURGERY

Mark Ayzenberg, MD, FAAOS

Please reference www.ironmountainortho.com and go to patient “Resources” and then to “Instructional Videos” for some videos that may apply to your care after surgery. Please note: not all surgeries will have instructional videos to review.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Rest and relax today. Do not resume usual activities.
2. **Keep your ankle elevated *above your heart level as much as possible, especially for the first 3-7 days to minimize swelling.*** Your leg should be elevated on multiple pillows while sleeping at night. Your pain will be much less if you keep your ankle elevated.
3. No strenuous activities. No heavy lifting, squatting, or excessive stair climbing.
4. No sports, gym or work until discussed at your first postoperative visit.
5. **Use crutches and do not place any weight on your operative leg as you may cause significant damage.**
 - a. The crutches should be used at all times until cleared by Dr. Ayzenberg.
6. **Exercises:**
 - a. Throughout the day, work on bending and straightening your knee and curling your toes. This will help with swelling, minimize stiffness and decrease risk of blood clots.
 - b. Practice quadriceps muscle tightening by straightening your knee as much as possible and holding the tension for 10 seconds at a time.
7. Please start physical therapy as prescribed after surgery unless otherwise instructed by Dr. Ayzenberg.
 - a. This script will be provided at your post-op visit when you are ready for PT.
 - b. It is important that you attend each session to attain the very best surgical outcome.
8. No driving while taking narcotic medications

CARE OF OPERATIVE SITE:

1. You may shower or sponge bathe, but you **must keep your splint and dressings dry and clean**. This often entails purchasing a waterproof cast protector or wrapping your ankle and splint in waterproof plastic garbage bags and sealing them thoroughly with tape. To keep it dry. It may be helpful and safer to get a shower chair and keep your ankle outside of the shower.
3. Elevate the ankle above your heart most of the day and all night for 48-72 hours, and then as much as possible and all night for the next 2 weeks to help reduce swelling and pain. Sleeping with multiple pillows under your ankle is helpful.
 - a. After ankle surgery, it is normal to have swelling.
 - b. You may reduce swelling in the foot and ankle by curling your toes frequently.
 - b. Restrict activity if excessive swelling is present and elevate your leg.
4. **Dressing care:**
 - a. Keep your splint clean, dry and intact
 - b. Do not apply any antiseptic ointment or medicine to the incisions.
 - c. Do not swim, take tub baths, or use a whirlpool until cleared by Dr. Ayzenberg.

MEDICATIONS:

1. Resume your medications and take any prescribed medications that have been added to your medication list. Your medication list is being sent home with you.
 - a. Take your pain medication with food to avoid any nausea or vomiting.
 - b. Eat only light non-greasy foods today. Patients may experience nausea for the first 24 hours after surgery due to the anesthesia received.
 - c. Pain medication may cause constipation. If this occurs, please increase your fluid intake (prune juice). You may also try over the counter stool softeners or laxatives.
 - i. Stool softener: Colace twice a day as directed.
 - ii. Laxatives: Milk of Magnesia as directed. (takes several hours to work).
2. In addition to the pain medication, you may take over-the-counter non-steroidal anti-inflammatories to control your pain and swelling (unless otherwise instructed by your surgeon or primary care doctor).
 - a. **Take one Aspirin 325 mg daily for 4 weeks.**
 - b. 7 days after surgery, you may take Motrin by mouth every 8 hours with food **or** Aleve by mouth every 12 hours with food. It is OK to combine this with Tylenol **ONLY IF** you are no longer using narcotics. When you are no longer taking narcotics, *it is preferred that you take just Tylenol and no NSAIDs such those noted in "d" below unless you need extra pain control. This is because NSAIDs in some studies have been shown to slow down bone healing.*

- c. If you are already taking blood thinners, such as Coumadin or Plavix, these medications should not be combined with non-steroidal anti-inflammatories (Advil/motrin/ibuprofen, Mobic, Aleve, Aspirin, Celebrex, Naproxen, and Voltaren). Do not take aspirin if you are currently taking a blood thinner.
- d. If taking a blood thinner prior to surgery, call your prescribing physician to see when you are to restart your medication.

ANESTHESIA:

1. Eat only light non-greasy foods today. Patients may experience nausea for the first 24 hours after surgery due to the anesthesia received.
2. Most patients receive a nerve block for additional pain control during surgery and post-operatively.
 - a. This numbing medication lasts for up to 18 hours before abruptly wearing off.
 - b. You may experience some numbness/tingling or burning in your foot/toes during the first 24-48 hours after surgery.
 - c. Be sure to take your pain medication as directed to avoid severe pain when the block wears off. It is prudent to take the first dose immediately as you feel any sense of pain coming on in order to avoid the abrupt onset of pain.

POST-OP VISIT:

1. Your first post-operative visit will be 10-14 days after surgery with Dr. Ayzenberg.
2. Please call the office the day after surgery to make or confirm your appointment. The phone number is: (215) 821-7059.
3. If you experience fevers >101.5F, or calf swelling and pain, or any other unexpected symptoms, please call the office or call service immediately.

Emergency Contact

1. If experiencing a true emergency, please call 911 or go to the ER.
2. Otherwise, please call the office at 215 821 7059 during office hours.

Thank you for entrusting Dr. Ayzenberg & Iron Mountain Orthopaedic Institute with your care.