**Post Operative Instructions:**

**Foot and Ankle Surgery**

**What To Expect After Foot and Ankle Surgery**

* After your surgery has been completed, you will be accompanied to the recovery room where you will spend the next hour recovering from the anesthesia.
* Depending on the type of surgery you had, your anesthesiologist may have administered a popliteal block, anaesthetic block in back of knee. This usually happens in the hour prior to surgery, and can be helpful for post-operative pain relief.
* Before going home, a splint will be applied, and the nursing staff will review and confirm your prescription and post-operative instructions.
* Anticipate swelling for 6 to 8 months

**The First 24 Hours**

* Once you are home from the operation, **REST**. To help minimize the swelling, it is important to keep your foot elevated at or above heart level; and place a bag of ice on the area or behind the knee with a towel to avoid getting the dressing wet. Ice for 20 minutes every 30 minutes while you are awake.
* Once you are situated at home, try to eat something light. This will prevent you from having an empty stomach when you begin taking **pain medication**. It is important to stay ahead of the pain rather than trying to catch up once the pain is unbearable. If you had a popliteal block, you may find that you do not need pain pills until 12 to 24 hours after the operation. For the first three days, make sure to take the pain medicine as directed. The pain medication and ice should help to “control” your pain, however, it will NOT take away all of the pain.

Obviously, do not attempt to operate heavy machinery, drive an automobile or make important decisions while under the influence of anesthesia for 24 hours after surgery or while taking pain medications.

* A small amount of blood on the surgical dressing is normal. **If the bleeding continues or if the toes are cold and blue, contact the office at 561-803-8505 to schedule an appointment.**

**Issues that should not be ignored:**

Although rare, any of the following symptoms are potential signs of a more severe complication:

**Fever above 101 degrees, chest pain, leg or calf swelling or pain, shortness of breath/difficulty breathing, a severe rash, extreme drowsiness, or excessive nausea and vomiting are all issues that merit further investigation.**

Please contact our office at 561-803-8505 with any questions or for any of the above concerns. As an abundance of caution, you may be directed to return to the clinic or proceed to a local hospital or emergency department for additional medical examination.

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**How much activity am I allowed?**

* It’s always best to limit activity for the first few days; remember: take it easy. The amount of activity varies depending on the procedure, but unless otherwise directed, non-weightbearing on the surgical side with the post-operative surgical boot and crutches or a walker as needed.
* It is advisable for the first few days to keep the foot as elevated as possible to minimize pain and swelling.
* Generally, you can resume driving when you return to regular shoes and full weight bearing, or earlier, on a case-by-case basis.

**How much pain medication can I take?**

The most common narcotics prescribed after foot and ankle surgery are Percocet or Vicodin. Both of these may be taken 1 to 2 tablets every 4 hours as needed for the pain. If you should experience significant nausea or an allergic reaction, please contact the office at 561-803-8505.

**What should I eat?**

It’s generally best to start with liquids, and then advance to light foods, progressing slowly.

**What about bathing and sleeping?**

* IT IS IMPORTANT TO ALWAYS KEEP THE SURGICAL DRESSING CLEAN AND DRY.
* To take a bath or shower, protect the operated foot with a cast cover or a clean plastic bag taped around the leg to avoid getting it wet.
* If your dressing gets wet, contact the office at 561-803-8505 to come in for a dressing change.
* Do NOT take a bath, get into a pool or hot tub, or soak your foot or ankle until cleared to do so

by your doctor!

**When is my next appointment?**

The doctor would like to evaluate you 1 week after surgery. If you haven’t already scheduled a post-operative appointment, call 561-803-8502 to do so.