

Ankle Fracture

Updated March 2020

CRUTCHES/SCOOTER:

At all times for ambulation for the first 6 weeks.

WEIGHT BEARING STATUS:

- Your surgeon or nurses will discuss weight bearing status with you.
- You will typically be non-weight bearing for 6 weeks.
- Should your surgeon determine you can weight bear earlier, he/she will tell you directly.

SPLINT:

- You will leave the hospital in a splint or a removable boot. Leave this on as instructed.
- At your first follow-up, you will be instructed to wear a removable boot.

PHYSICAL THERAPY:

- Start formal physical therapy 6 weeks from surgery.

WOUND CARE:

Bandages:

- If you find that your dressing is too tight, you may unwrap the tensor bandage and rewrap it looser.
- Do not remove your splint. You will receive specific instructions if you are to change your dressings.

Shower:

- You may shower but must keep your splint dry.
- **NO soaking in bathtub/hot tub or pool for first 2-3 weeks, even when your splint is off.**

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF INFECTION:

- Excessive or worsening pain, increased redness around the incision sites, drainage from incisions that looks like pus and/or is foul smelling, if fever runs above 38.5°C
- If any of the above symptoms occur call Central Alberta Orthopedics at 403-309-2001 or go to the emergency department right away.

CONTROL OF PAIN AND SWELLING:

Pain Medication:

- For the first few days take your pain medication regularly as instructed, then wean as tolerated. Avoid taking pain medications on an empty stomach, as it can make you nauseous.
- Wean yourself off of Percocet/Tramacet to Extra Strength Tylenol (acetaminophen) by Day 5 after surgery

Cold Therapy:

With a removable boot:

- If you have a cold therapy machine, use it as much as possible, as per device instructions
- If you don't have cold therapy machine, you can remove outer bandage to ice for 20-30 minutes, at least four times for several days. You may use it more frequently as needed. It will help in reducing pain. Avoid placing ice directly on bare skin to prevent frostbite and give a break of 30 minutes in between sessions.

Elevation:

- Keep leg elevated above the level of your heart as often as possible with a pillow under your calf, NOT under the knee.

PREVENTING BLOOD CLOTS

- Make sure you get up and walk around as much as possible; mobilizing helps prevent clots.
- Take the blood thinner your surgeon prescribed.

Signs and Symptoms of Blood Clots:

- Severe and worsening pain and swelling in calf muscle.
- If any of the above symptoms occur call Health Link at 8-1-1 or go to the emergency department right away.

DRIVING

- Right ankle – at least 6 weeks after surgery
- Left ankle - you may drive an automatic vehicle if you are in a below knee cast or splint.
- You may return to driving a vehicle (non-commercial) when you are no longer affected by pain, under the influence of pain medications, able to **fully weight bear on right leg and foot**, and are confident that you can react appropriately in an emergency.

Due to the anesthetic, for the next 24 hours: Do NOT drive, sign legal documents, provide child care on your own or consume alcohol.