

PATIENT POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

Ankle Arthroscopy / Loose Body Removal / Debridement

1. DRESSINGS AND SUTURES

- In general, you can begin showering 2-3 days after surgery, as long as the dressings and your incisions are kept covered and dry.
 - Typically the physical therapist will change your dressings at the first visit post surgery.
 - Normally the sutures are removed 7-10 days after surgery at your first post-op appointment.
 - Leave the incisions and sutures covered until your first post-op appointment.
- Do your best to keep the surgical site dry.
 - Make sure to towel dry/dab the surgical site, however DO NOT rub the area.
- Do **NOT** submerge the ankle (ie. hot tub / bath, swimming, etc) until at least 2 weeks after surgery.

2. ACTIVITY

- Full weight bearing on the surgical leg is allowed immediately after surgery unless told otherwise by Dr. Berry or his assistant. Crutches have been provided to assist you with this while your pain decreases. You can discontinue use of the crutches as tolerated, but begin to wean off the crutches as soon as you can.
- When using the crutches, attempt to walk in a normal gait pattern (heel-to-toe).
- Avoid excessive exercise for the first 72 hours post-op.
- You are allowed to drive when you can walk normally without crutches and not under the influence of pain medications.

3. PHYSICAL THERAPY

- Your first physical therapy session should occur approximately **24-48 hours after your surgery**.
 - It is recommended to schedule this appointment before your surgery occurs as many physical therapy clinics have extended wait lists.
 - A physical therapy prescription will be provided to you at your preoperative appointment. Please follow the instructions that the medical assistant has given you.
- It is recommended that you attend physical therapy 2-3 times per week for the first 3-4 weeks after surgery, with exercises performed daily at home.
 - People often ask if they can do this on their own, or do it with a trainer at the gym, our answer is **NO!**

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4. PAIN

- You have been provided with a prescription for several different medications that when used together will provide the most effective relief after your surgery.
 - Read each bottle carefully and follow instructions
- Once you no longer require narcotics for pain control, switch to Extra-Strength Tylenol as required, but do not take Tylenol with the narcotic.
- Use an ice pack or cold therapy delivery system for 20 mins every hour while awake to help with pain and swelling.

5. BLEEDING AND SWELLING

- It is common to have some spotting through the dressings following surgery. Place an additional dressing over the area if this occurs.
- The incisions may continue to “leak” fluid after removal of the initial dressing – this is common and should not raise concern. Place an additional bandage or Band-Aids over the incisions to help them heal. Keep the incisions clean and dry.
- When sitting or lying, keep your ankle elevated with several pillows placed under the ankle (not the knee) to help decrease swelling and relieve pain.

6. DIET

- Resume your regular diet following surgery – drink plenty of fluids!
- Add additional fiber to your diet to help relieve the constipation associated with the pain medication.

7. RED FLAGS

- Complications after Ankle Arthroscopy are very rare but can occur. If you develop any of the following symptoms go to your nearest emergency department for assessment:
 - Increasing calf pain / swelling that does not improve with elevation and ice
 - Shortness of breath
 - Chest pain
 - Redness and purulent drainage around the incision

8. POST-OPERATIVE VISIT

- Your first post-operative visit is scheduled for: _____