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After Foot or Ankle Surgery – A Patient Guide

What should I expect after my operation? Once in the recovery area of theatres you will awake from the sedation or general anaesthetic or, you may have been awake throughout the procedure. Your foot and ankle will be elevated and have a bandage or plaster around. An anaesthetic block will have been given around your ankle or toe, ensuring you are in minimal discomfort. Once fully awake, you will return to the ward.

When can I go home? Most surgery is performed as a day case procedure and you will be able to go home between 2-4 hours after you have returned to your ward. This may be later depending on what has been done. You must have eaten, drunk, passed water, have manageable pain and be safe to mobilise. A physiotherapist or nurse will assess if you are fit for discharge. Someone will be needed to take you home.

What should I do when at home?

***Elevation:** Strict elevation of the foot at the level of the chest, for 23 hours a day for 3 / 7 / 14 days (for pain relief, swelling and wound healing). Place 2 pillows under your mattress for elevation when sleeping for this period.

Pain Relief: Regular (3-4 times/day) pain relief (Paracetamol, Codeine and/or Diclofenac). The anaesthetic block will wear off approximately 6-12 hours after surgery, may be sooner. Take the pain relief tablets given to you at discharge when you start feeling some discomfort. Do not wait for significant pain before taking pain killers.

***Bandage:** Please keep it dry. You can:

1. Unwrap and remove the bandage yourself 48 hours after surgery. There may be gauze underneath (white or blue), this can also be removed. Underneath will be one or more waterproof dressings, leave these on until you see Mr Gordon or the nurse in dressings clinic (10-14 days). There may be some blood staining underneath the dressing, this is normal.
2. Leave the bandage on until your clinic appointment (10-14 days).

***Footwear after bandage removal:** 1. A normal shoe 2. Keep using the post operative sandal / boot provided

***At night, the post operative sandal / boot:** 1. Can be removed 2. Should be left on

Plaster of Paris (if applied): Please keep it dry.

Bath/Showering: Use a cast / bandage protector for bathing, Eg. LimbO, Bloccs, to keep the area dry. If you have been allowed to remove your bandage, you may have a light shower after 3 days, keeping the waterproof dressing(s) on and not soaking them. Wrapping the area in cling film is helpful or use a protector.

***Weight bearing:** Your weight bearing status (the % body weight you can put through the operated leg) is:

Full weight bearing (100%) / Partial weight bearing (50%) / Touch weight bearing (10%) / Non weight bearing (0%)

A physiotherapist or nurse will assess you and provide crutches if necessary. Bathroom scales can be used to determine how much weight you're putting through the leg.

Exercises: Move toes and ankle up and down (if not in plaster) as pain allows, 10 times every 30 minutes.

Clinic Appointment: You will be given an appointment to see Mr Gordon in 10-14 days. Your wound will be reviewed and stitches removed if necessary.