

Postoperative Instructions for Dr. Ringus' Patients

After surgery it is important to do the following things:

Rest – as much as appropriate

Ice – as often as possible as long as comfortable. An ice therapy unit may help a great deal.

Elevate – as often and as long as possible as long as comfortable.

Keep the dressing clean and dry - Do not try to take it off or adjust it too much. If the dressing feels overly tight the Ace wrap bandages can be loosened.

Wiggle your toes – This helps with the swelling.

Take your postoperative medications as scheduled – if you have problems with this, call the office.

Follow up as scheduled

Postoperative Expectations

Everyone reacts differently after surgery. However, here are some things to look for after foot and ankle surgery that are normal. Keep in mind different procedures will produce varying levels of these findings.

Pain – Everyone has some level of postsurgical pain. It peaks at 24-48 hours and then gets better. If the narcotics you have aren't controlling your pain please call the office. However, be patient and give your incision time to recover and the narcotics time to work.

Swelling – There is always some swelling after surgery; especially foot and ankle surgery. Gravity pulls swelling down so it tends to be the worst in the lower parts of your body. Elevation, ice (particularly a circulating ice pack), and movement of your toes helps control postoperative swelling.

Elevation: Keep the extremity above the level of your hear as long as feasible.

Ice: Keep the extremity cool at intervals, so long as it is comfortable, is advisable as often as possible

Mobility: Moving your toes helps your muscles squeeze fluid (increase venous return and lymphatic drainage) back to your heart.

Redness – Our bodies react to surgery by generating some redness. Consider it normal for the first few days or week after surgery. If it continues to stay red or worsens, call the office or go to the ER if concerned.

1 **Drainage** – A small amount of drainage is to be expected – usually this happens in the first few days after surgery and dries on the dressing. If it seems excessive, has a foul odor, or looks greenish or purulent, call the office or go to the ER.

Numbness – After every surgery some numbness can occur. Usually these are superficial nerves that improve over time. This can be caused by swelling (usually) or the incision. Monitor this to make sure it doesn't get worse.

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to call the office or if concerned, go to the emergency room.

Postoperative Protocol

Depending on the procedure these may change. These are general guidelines for Dr. Ringus' patients.

After typical foot and ankle surgery I have my patients:

Patients are placed in a splint for **1 week** non- or toe-touch weight bearing.

At one week after the surgery, the patient returns to the clinic, the dressing is changed, and sutures are taken out if ready.

A cast is placed for **2 more weeks** and the patient remains non- or toe-touch weight bearing.

At **3 weeks** after surgery, the patient returns to the clinic and the patient's cast is changed and the patient remains non- or toe-touch weight bearing.

At **6 weeks** after surgery, the patient returns to the clinic and the cast is removed and the patient is placed into a boot. Physical therapy is instituted and the patient gradually begins weight bearing.

*25% of bodyweight for the 1st week
50% of bodyweight for the 2nd week
75% of bodyweight for the 3rd week*

At **9 weeks** after surgery, the patient returns to the clinic and is allowed full weight bearing in the boot.

At **12 weeks** after surgery, the patient is taken out of the boot and may return footwear.

X-rays are taken during clinic visits as deemed appropriate.

Postoperative instructions will vary based on procedure and progress. In some cases an accelerated protocol may be instituted. Please ask your surgeon about that.