

**POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS**  
**ANKLE ARTHROSCOPY**  
**Debridement / Chondroplasty / Loose Body Removal**  
Dr. Adam O'Brien

**MEDICATION**

- You will be prescribed a narcotic pain medication with or without additional Tylenol, take as instructed and only as needed. Do not take additional Tylenol unless prescribed.
  - **Pain medication may cause constipation.** You may take an over the counter stool softener (docusate, senna, Miralax, etc) to help prevent this problem.
  - You should take these medicines with food or they may nauseate you.
  - You may not drive or operate heavy equipment while on narcotics.
  - Pain medication is refilled on an individual basis and only during office hours.
- If you have a nerve block, begin taking the pills as you feel your sensation returning to prevent a sudden onset of extreme pain (typically 6-12 hours after your surgery). **Do not wait until the block completely wears off.**
- Take one regular aspirin (325 mg) once a day for 14 days unless you have been prescribed Lovenox, are on another blood thinner, or have a history of stomach ulcers.
- If prescribed Lovenox or Xarelto for prevention of blood clots, begin the day AFTER surgery and finish all injections or pills.
- **Resume all home medications unless otherwise instructed.**

**WOUND CARE and DRESSINGS**

- You may remove your bandages two days after surgery unless instructed otherwise. Do not remove the steri-strips (small pieces of tape) covering the incisions.
- Do not get your dressings wet. When showering (after dressings removed), let water run over the incisions and pat dry (no scrubbing).
- Incisions may not get wet until after your first postoperative visit. **No submersion of wounds (bath, hot tub, pool) until a minimum of 2 weeks after surgery.**
- You may notice small spotting through your dressings, this is normal. You may place an additional bandage of this area. If it becomes saturated, it is ok to change the dressings entirely and replace them

**BRUISING**

- Your foot and toes may become swollen and bruised, which is normal and is from the fluid and blood moving down the leg. It should resolve in 10-14 days.
- **If you experience severe calf pain/swelling, call immediately** (see contact info).

### **COLD THERAPY**

- Ice should be used for comfort and swelling. Use it at least 20 minutes at a time, every hour while awake if needed. (A simple bag of peas works well as an inexpensive alternative)
- **Never apply directly to exposed skin. Place a dish-towel or t-shirt between your skin and the ice.**

### **CRUTCHES**

- You may place full weight on the involved leg, unless instructed otherwise, after surgery to help with balance and stability.
- Crutches will be needed initially for comfort unless instructed otherwise until you can walk with a normal gait (heel to toe walk).

### **DRIVING**

- You may drive when off all narcotics and feel you can adequately react. You must be able to brake firmly and comfortably.
- You should practice first in an empty parking lot.

### **EXERCISES**

- Your first physical therapy session should occur within 5-7 days after surgery
  - It is a good idea to schedule this before surgery to avoid wait lists
  - Physical therapy is crucial to recovery, and much of the work is **homework!**
- Elevate your leg for several days to help with swelling.

### **EMERGENCIES**

- Please call if you notice any of the following (see contact info below):
  - Uncontrolled nausea or vomiting, suspected reaction to medication, inability to urinate, fever greater than 101.5 (low grade fevers 1-2 days after surgery are normal), severe pain not relieved by pain medication, redness or continued drainage around incisions (a small amount is normal), calf pain or severe swelling.
- **If you are having chest pain or difficulty breathing, call 911 or go to the closest emergency room.**

### **FOLLOW UP APPOINTMENT**

- Please make your first post-op visit 7-14 days after surgery if not already scheduled.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

- For surgery or prescription related questions or concerns, please contact:
  - **Monday-Friday (8AM-5PM)** – Ortho Triage Nurse at 512-509-2525 (option 1).
  - **After Hours (M-F 5PM-8AM/weekends/holidays)** – Patient Advisory Nurse at 1-800-724-7037.
- For any scheduling or appointment questions or concerns please call 512-654-6588 (M-F, 8AM-5PM).