

Discharge Instructions for Ankle Surgery



You had ankle surgery. This surgery is done for a variety of reasons. You and your healthcare provider discussed your condition and the surgery before the procedure. Here are instructions that will help you care for your ankle when you are at home.

Activity

- Plan to stay on the first floor of your home as much as possible for the first week or two after the surgery.
- Arrange your household to keep the items you need handy.
- Remove electrical cords, throw rugs, and anything else that may cause you to fall.
- Use nonslip bath mats, grab bars, a raised toilet seat, and a shower chair in your bathroom.
- Use a cane, crutches, a walker, or handrails until your balance, flexibility, and strength improve. And remember to ask for help from others when you need it.
- Free up your hands so that you can use them to keep balance. Do this by using a fanny pack, apron, or pockets to carry things.
- Follow the weight-bearing instructions given to you by your healthcare provider. They will tell you how much weight you are—or are not—allowed to put on your ankle.
- Do all the exercises you learned in the hospital, as instructed by your healthcare provider.
- Don't drive until your healthcare provider says it's OK. And never drive if you are taking opioid pain medicine or any medicine that makes you sleepy.
- Follow your healthcare provider's instructions regarding care for your dressing, splint, or cast. A supportive dressing, splint, or cast may be applied after surgery to protect your ankle as it heals.

Home care

- Don't soak your ankle in water until your incisions are completely closed and dried and you have been instructed that it's OK to bathe.
- Follow your healthcare provider's instructions about showering. They will tell you when you can begin showering again. Carefully cover your ankle with plastic to keep the dressing, splint, or cast dry. Seal the plastic with tape to prevent water from seeping in. To prevent a fall while showering, sit on a shower stool or chair.
- Use an ice pack to reduce the swelling. Keep the foot raised above the level of your heart. Apply the ice pack for 20 minutes several times a day for the first 2 to 3 days or as instructed. To make an ice pack, put ice cubes in a plastic bag that seals at the top. Wrap the bag in a clean, thin towel or cloth. Never put ice or an ice pack directly on the skin. The ice pack can be put right on the cast or splint.
- Take pain medicine as directed.
- Sleep with 2 pillows under your knee and ankle. Keep your ankle raised above heart level when sitting in a chair or on the couch.

Call 911

Call 911 right away if you have any of the following:

- Chest pain
- Shortness of breath
- Painful calf that is sore, reddened, and warm to the touch
- Coughing up blood

When to call your healthcare provider

Call your healthcare provider or seek medical care right away if you have any of the following:

- An ankle splint, cast, or bandage that has become wet
- Sensation that the splint or cast is becoming tighter, especially if you have pain with movement of your toes, numbness or tingling, toes become cold or blue, or a sudden increase in pain
- Swelling in the foot, ankle, or calf that is not relieved by raising the foot
- Fever of 100.4°F (or 38°C) or higher, or as directed by your healthcare provider
- Shaking chills
- Increased pain with or without activity
- Drainage, redness, or warmth at the incision
- An incision that opens

© 2000-2027 The StayWell Company, LLC. All rights reserved. This information is not intended as a substitute for professional medical care. Always follow your healthcare professional's instructions
This information is not intended as a substitute for professional medical care. Always follow your Healthcare professional's instructions. Copyright Krames LLC.