



Lower Extremity ORIF

Discharge Instructions

- Comfort
 - Discomfort increases 6-24h after surgery due to anesthetic/nerve block wearing off (if a nerve block was performed). This can be helped by oral pain medication. It is safe and normal.
 - Cold therapy – This will greatly reduce pain and will help with swelling for the first three days. You may use it 20 minutes on, 20 minutes off, as often as you wish. Always keep a cloth barrier, such as a towel, between the cold and your skin.

Medication

- For constipation – over the counter remedies such as Colace or Miralax as needed. Both the anesthesia and the pain medication can cause constipation.
- For pain – you have been prescribed a narcotic medication for pain. No driving while on this medication. Try to manage your pain with ice and Tylenol and use the narcotic sparingly. You can take the narcotic as prescribed as needed. Common side effects such as constipation, nausea and cognitive impairment may occur. You can step-down to Tylenol as soon as you feel ready.
- For anticoagulation – you should take a baby aspirin (81mg) once a day for two weeks to prevent blood clots.

Activity

- You will be in cast/splint for 4-6 weeks after surgery, nonweightbearing on operative extremity
- You should continue to move your other limbs

Wound Care

- If you are in a cast, you will remain in the cast for 4-6 weeks after surgery. Avoid getting the cast wet. If the cast feels too tight, call our office at 630-377-1188. If the cast starts to loosen, we may have to re-fit it at your first post-op.
- If you are in a splint with a bandage and ACE wrap, you can loosen the ACE wrap but do not remove the splint or white bandages underneath for 3-5 days after surgery. That means for the first 3-5 days, you should keep the leg dry (use a bag for showering, hold it out, etc.)
 - After 3-5 days, you can take off the bandages and shower (i.e. let water run over it), but no soaking or scrubbing the incision. No ointments over the incision.
- If you are in an external fixator covered by an ACE wrap, you can adjust the ACE wrap as needed but keep the external fixator pin sites clean and covered. Do not get the leg or external fixator wet. Do not put any weight on the leg.

Diet

- You may eat anything you like, but it's advisable to choose light, easily digestible foods and to drink plenty of water the day after surgery. Some people experience nausea as a temporary reaction to anesthesia.



Call your physician if:

- You develop a temperature over 100.3 degrees.
- You notice any drainage of the incisions 5 days or later after surgery.
- The arm becomes hot to the touch, red, intolerably painful, or swells suddenly. (Note some warmth, pain, and swelling are normal.)
- You have persistent pain and / or swelling in your calf.
- You have any questions or concerns. We are happy to talk to you at any time! If it is after hours, our answering service will page the PA on call and he or she will get in touch with you.