

Ankle Fracture Post Op Instructions

Drew Ratner MD

Blue Ridge Orthopedics - Easley
309 E 1st Ave
Easley, SC 29640
(864) 724-6131
drewratnermd@gmail.com



Initial Instructions

- Ice along with pain medicine are your keys to initial pain management.
- After you arrive home, rest the remainder of the day. You may be tired or nauseated from the anesthesia and/or pain medication.
- You will be placed into a CAM Walker Boot after surgery.

Dressing Change

- Leave the dressing in place until your follow up appointment.
- It is extremely important to keep the surgical site clean and dry at all times to help prevent infection.
- Signs of infection include redness, swelling, increased pain, warmth, fever (above 101.4 degrees F) and drainage from the wound. If you note any of these signs, please call the office immediately

Bathing

- You may shower **after your surgery** but keep your ankle dry and covered.
- After your stitches are removed, you may shower and clean the wound gently with soap and water but **Do not soak or submerge** the surgical site until the wounds are completely healed (typically 3-4 weeks after surgery).

Activity

- May return to **sedentary work ONLY** the day after surgery, if pain is tolerable
- **OK to use computer.**
- **Elevate** your leg above your heart as much as possible during the first 6 weeks after surgery. Many times, the best way to do this is by using a reclining chair.
- You will be non-weight bearing for at least 6 weeks (in some cases longer, which will be discussed by Dr. Ratner)
- You will begin to work on range of motion of ankle beginning after first post op appointment

Physical Therapy

- Usually, no formal physical therapy is required for this surgery. If you would like for Dr. Ratner to prescribe therapy for you then discuss this with him postoperatively

CAM Walker Boot

- You will be put in a CAM Walker Boot after surgery
- This should be worn for most of the day. The primary purpose of this splint while you are non-weight bearing is to keep the ankle flexed up to stretch your Achilles tendon. It also provides some protection. You can remove it to shower and to sleep.
- Once Dr. Ratner allows you to start putting weight on your ankle, you will continue to wear this boot for 4-6 additional weeks to provide extra support.

Ice Therapy

- Icing is very important to decrease swelling and pain and improve mobility.
- Please place ice over your ankle for 20 minutes 4-6 times per day after you have been placed into removable CAM Walker Boot.
- Be sure to keep clothing or a towel between ice and skin, as placing the ice directly on skin may cause frostbite. **DO NOT PLACE DIRECTLY ON SKIN.**

Medications

- **If placed, nerve blocks and pain medication injected into the wound will wear off from 8-24 hours after surgery.**
- Recommendation is to take scheduled Tylenol 1000mg three times per day and 800mg ibuprofen three times per day.
- You will be given a narcotic pain medication. This should be taken for breakthrough pain every 8 hours for pain if necessary. Take with a little food.
- Narcotic pain medications **will not alleviate all of your discomfort**
- **Ice and elevation** will aide in additional pain control
- Take medications as prescribed
- **Do not mix narcotics** with alcohol
- Common side effects of narcotic pain medications include
 - Nausea- Take medication with food. If prescribed you may use anti-nausea medication. If nausea persists, call the office to consider having the medication changed.
 - Drowsiness
 - Constipation - We recommend purchasing an over-the-counter stool softener (such as colace) to take as directed while taking narcotics to prevent constipation. You will be given a prescription for this.
- **Do not drive a vehicle or operate heavy machinery while on narcotic pain medications**
- **Narcotics and pain medications will not be refilled on weekends or after hours.**
- You will likely be given a prescription for aspirin 325mg to take post-operatively. This is taken only once a day for 4 weeks post-operatively to prevent blood clots. The dosing and duration may change on an individual basis, but it should be reflected in the prescription that you are given.
- You will be given Ergocalciferol (Vitamin D₂) 50,000 units weekly to take for 8 weeks & Calcium 500mg to be taken three times per day for 8 weeks. Both of these medicines aid in bone healing.

Post-Op Office Appointment

- If the appointment was not arranged prior to surgery, please contact the office at 864-206-5905
- Your first post-operative visit will be made in the office prior to surgery.
- Depending on the procedure plan for follow-up visits at 6 weeks, 3 months, and 6 months after surgery.

Emergencies or Concerns

- Email Dr. Ratner at drewratnermd@gmail.com
- Or Contact the office or go to the nearest emergency room if you have any of the following:
 - Pain worsens or does not go away after pain medication is taken.
 - Any abrupt change in the nature or severity of pain
 - Redness or swelling in your thigh or calf that will not decrease.
 - Redness around incisions
 - Continuous drainage or bleeding from the incision (occasional drainage is expected)
 - Difficulties moving your fingers or extreme pain when moving your fingers
 - Numbness or tingling that does not go away or is getting worse
 - Cold foot or color change in extremity (Please be aware that the skin prep in surgery may have an orange, brown, or blue tint)
 - Develop a fever greater than 101.5 degrees F.
 - Chest pain, shortness of breath, intractable nausea/vomiting, or anything else concerning
 - If you have an emergency that requires immediate attention, proceed to the nearest emergency room.