

Advice for Patients following Foot Surgery

**Trauma & Orthopaedics
Surgery & Critical Care**

This leaflet has been designed to give you important postoperative information following foot and ankle surgery.



Information for patients and visitors

Introduction

You are receiving this leaflet as you have just had foot and ankle surgery. The aim of this leaflet is to aid your recovery.

The First 48 Hours

You must wear the post-operative shoe at all times when you want to walk. You can bear weight on the foot that has been operated on unless told not to do so by the Orthopaedic surgeon.

While at rest, you should lie down in bed or on a sofa so that your feet are at the same level as your chest.

Do not keep your foot hanging down while seated in a chair for any more than 5 to 10 minutes to avoid the foot swelling up even further.

It is recommended that you take the full dose of the pain medication that has been prescribed for you during this time.

You will also be asked to do some exercises with both feet for 5-10 minutes every 2 hours whilst you are awake. These involve moving your feet up and down at the ankle joint. These exercises are important as they help reduce swelling and minimise the risk of getting a blood clot in your leg.

From 2 Days to 2 Weeks

You do need to continue to do the foot exercises.

During this time you can start to be even more active.

You can bear weight on your feet for up to 10 minutes. When you are not on your feet it is recommended that you sit down with the operated leg on a stool or support so that it is at the same level as your hip. In bed it is advisable to keep the foot elevated on a pillow to help in reducing the post-operative swelling.

Do not keep your foot hanging down while seated in a chair for any more than 5 to 10 minutes to avoid the foot swelling up even further.

You can now take the pain medication as you feel you need it but do not exceed the prescribed maximum dose.

You must keep your foot dry and avoid getting the dressing wet. Your dressing will usually be changed at 2 weeks either in the Out-patients department or at your GP practice.



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From 2 Weeks to 6 Weeks

You can continue to be more active and bear weight on your feet for up to 30 minutes. It is still recommended to sit with your foot elevated (to hip level) when you are not weight bearing. The pain from the surgery should be reducing each day. It is unlikely that you will need pain medication at this time.

You can stop wearing the post-operative shoe and bathe your foot at 6 to 8 weeks or as recommended by the doctor at the time of post-operative follow up. If your surgery has involved creating a fracture to one of the bones or fusing a joint you will normally be seen back in the Out-patients department at 6 weeks where your foot will be X-rayed.

From 4 Weeks to 6 Months

It is normal for the foot to be swollen around the site of the surgery for at least 3-6 months. This may mean wearing a wide fitting shoe such as a trainer or sandal when you come out of the post-operative shoe. It is normal to experience some discomfort in the area as it usually takes the foot 6 months to fully settle down following surgery.

Additional patient information for specific foot conditions can be obtained from the British Foot and Ankle Society website: www.bofas.org.uk

Any concerns post-operatively?

If there are any concerns post-operatively such as calf swelling and pain which can be due to deep vein thrombosis (DVT), post-operative bleeding or excessive pain then you should contact the Consultant secretary to arrange an early appointment. If it is urgent then you should contact your GP or attend the local Accident and Emergency to be assessed by the Orthopaedic on call.

It is essential that the dressing is kept dry and not disturbed until the sutures are removed at 2 week follow-up. After 2 weeks the patient can have a shower but the wound should be mopped dry as soon as possible and kept dry. Protective covers can be worn while having shower. It is best to avoid bath for about 4 to 6 weeks from surgery.

Advice on return to work and driving will be given by the treating consultant and it will be individualized based on the post-operative recovery.

Contact Details for Further Information

In cases of severe pain contact the Pre-admission department or your GP.

Pre-admission clinic Goole: 03033 304272

Pre-admission clinic Scunthorpe: 03033 302140



Information for patients and visitors

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service offers confidential advice, support and information on any health related matters.

If you have a comment, concern, complaint or compliment about the care or service you have received from the Trust you can contact the PALS team as follows:

Telephone: 03033 306518

Email: nlg-tr.PALS@nhs.net

There are also offices at both the Diana Princess of Wales Hospital (near the main entrance) and Scunthorpe General Hospital (on the C Floor, near the outpatient department), should you wish to visit.

Please note: PALS should not be contacted for clinical advice relating to the content of this leaflet. The service should be contacted directly in the first instance.

Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust

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