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ANKLE ORIF (Open Reduction, Internal Fixation) - Postoperative Instructions

Follow-up appointment: Our office will call you the next business day after surgery to schedule a postoperative visit (usually 10 days after surgery). At that time you will be given the opportunity to ask questions about your surgery or discuss any difficulties you may have.

About your dressing: Your ankle is placed in a temporary **splint that needs to remain on and kept clean and dry**. You may shower but be sure that the splint is covered and out of the flow of water. You have stitches that will need to be removed at your follow-up visit.

About pain and swelling: Some discomfort is to be expected following this surgery. Your surgeon uses a local anesthesia at the ankle that will provide pain relief for 6-10 hours following surgery. The best way to control the discomfort is to keep the leg elevated (above the level of the heart) and apply ice (enclosed in a plastic bag and wrapped in a dry towel) to the ankle for 20 minutes out of an hour, repeating as needed.

For mild to moderate pain, we advise using a non-narcotic medication such as Tylenol (acetaminophen) or one of the nonsteroidals (Motrin, Aleve, Advil) as long as you don't have contraindications to these medications. For moderate to severe pain, narcotics may be used sparingly as prescribed. Please do not combine narcotic medication with alcoholic beverages. **Do not drive while taking narcotics.**

Postoperative activities:

_____ Apply as much weight to the leg as is comfortable, using the crutches only as needed for comfort. Avoid strenuous activities.

_____ Use crutches at all times. Apply only minimal weight to the operative leg, **just enough to maintain balance while using the crutches.**

_____ Non-weight bearing, use crutches at all times. **Do not put any weight** on the operative leg

Return to work: Return to work will depend on your work duties- this should be discussed with your surgeon.

Driving: Please do not drive for 24 hours after surgery.

_____ LEFT ankle - OK to resume **driving when you are no longer taking narcotics**

_____ RIGHT ankle - no driving until cleared by your surgeon

Warning signs: If you have fevers or chills, the pain is not manageable, there is bloody drainage or pus, red streaking up your leg, calf pain, shortness of breath or if you have any other questions, **please call our office at (978) 534-6333.**