

Andrew Pao, MD

Post Operative Instructions
203-869-1145



First Post Op Appointment

☐ 2-3 DAYS ☐ 7 DAYS ☐ 2 WEEKS ☐ 3 WEEKS

After surgery, your foot/ankle/leg will be in:

☐ DRY DRESSING ☐ SPLINT ☐ CAST ☐ POST OP SHOE / BOOT

Weight-bearing:

☐ Non-Weightbearing ☐ Partial Weightbearing ☐ Weightbearing As Tolerated

-Keep the dressing/splint/cast dry! DON'T remove it. Call the office if you get it wet.

-If instructed, stay non-weightbearing with crutches and/or knee scooter.

Medications:

Pain Medication:

☐ OXYCODONE 5 mg / 10 mg - take as directed AS NEEDED for pain

Nausea:

☐ ZOFRAN 4 mg oral every 8 hours AS NEEDED for nausea

Antibiotic:

☐ CEFADROXIL 500 mg oral 2X / day (start post op day #1) x 3 days

☐ alternate

Blood Thinner:

☐ ASPIRIN 325 MG (over the counter) 1X/day (start post op day #1) x ____ weeks

☐ N/A

Misc:

☐ Ok for Tylenol ☐ Ok for Advil

-*Pain / nausea / antibiotic* medications are typically prescription.

-*Pain / nausea* medication are taken on an AS NEEDED basis.

-Take *antibiotic +/- blood thinner* (as directed) starting **FIRST day** after surgery (post op day #1)

The following are general guidelines and instructions about what to expect the first weeks following surgery. These are not specific, and your recovery may be slightly different. Please follow the instructions that are specifically written out for you after the surgery if there are any questions.

Pain Management

- If you have received a nerve block, the pain relief can last anywhere from 12-30 hours (everyone is a bit different), this also means you may not have sensation or movement in your foot for that amount of time. You will have some discomfort after the block wears off.
- Toes may be swollen, may have numb/tingly feeling and this is normal.
- You can start taking the stronger (narcotic) pain medication as you start feeling pain or feeling the nerve block wearing off. It may be helpful to stick to a regular schedule with these medications for the first few doses until you have a good sense of the severity of your pain. You can expect that the first couple days will be the most uncomfortable.
- As your pain improves, you can gradually decrease your pain meds by utilizing Tylenol or an anti-inflammatory medication. You can also use these medications as directed early in the post-operative process to supplement the narcotic pain medication.

Dressing

- Bleeding through the dressings is common. This usually occurs shortly after surgery. The actual bleeding has stopped by the time you see the drainage through your dressings. You can reinforce the outside of the dressing with gauze and an Ace wrap unless otherwise directed.
- In most cases, your first dressing change will be performed at your first clinic follow-up visit. Your dressing and incisions should be always kept DRY – do NOT shower, bathe, or wet your dressing in any way after surgery!

Elevation

- Elevation of the foot / ankle remains important at least up to 2 weeks after surgery to limit swelling and help wound healing. Elevate your foot/ankle to at least your waist level but above your heart would be best. The more you elevate your foot and ankle, the less pain / swelling you will generally have.
- In the first few days following surgery, restrict the time your foot is “down” to 10 minutes or less at a time.

Activity

- Specific weight bearing instructions for after your surgery will be provided by Dr. Pao. In most cases (unless otherwise instructed), you may not bear weight on your operated foot/ankle for at least 2 weeks after surgery. That means the foot may not touch the ground when upright! This means using crutches or a knee scooter to get around. Be very careful if you try to go up and down stairs and avoid falling. It'd be best to try to stay on the ground floor of your home.
- It is also good to keep your blood flowing through the operated leg and limit the risk of blood clots. The first day following surgery, I would encourage you to get up and move around the house for a few minutes every hour while you are awake and then return to elevating the foot.

Medications

- Read all medication labels and take according to instructions.
- Take pain medications with food to avoid nausea.
- Do NOT drink alcohol while on pain medication.
- Blood thinner / antibiotic reduces the risk of DVT / infection.
- Constipation -Take an over the counter stool softener such as Colace / Miralax after your surgery to prevent constipation. This is a common side effect of the pain medications. You may stop taking this after you have regular bowel movements or no longer require use of narcotic pain medications.

What To Watch For...

- Severe swelling and/or pain in the calf: this could indicate a deep vein thrombosis (blood clot in leg) which requires urgent evaluation and treatment!
- Profuse bleeding: that which soaks through your dressing and increases in size throughout the first day after surgery.
- Blue or white toes: this indicates a lack of blood flow to the foot.
- Fever greater than 101.5: fevers less than this are very common the first few days after surgery and are unlikely to indicate infection or any unexpected problem.
- If you accidentally FALL after surgery, please let my office know.

If you have any concerns, please contact my office (203-869-1145) and further instructions will be provided. Additional information from reputable orthopaedic foot and ankle surgeons affiliated with the American Orthopaedic Foot and Ankle Society (AOFAS) can be found at <http://www.footcaremd.com>