

Lower Extremity Fracture Care Postoperative Instructions

Initial Instructions

- Ice and elevation 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.
- If you were placed in a splint/cast or given a brace, you must wear it until advised by your physician.
- If you were given crutches upon discharge, continue to use as directed.

Dressing Change

- Leave the dressing in place following surgery.
- The splint or cast must stay in place until your follow-up visit with the physician.

Splint/Cast Care

- SEE CAST CARE INSTRUCTIONS

Bracing

- You may be placed in a brace after surgery instead of a splint/cast.
- You are to remain in the brace at all times until instructed otherwise by your therapist or physician.
- Do not adjust the brace unless you are instructed to do so.

Bathing

- The splint or cast must stay dry and clean at all times.
- Bathing recommendations if splint/cast/brace in place:
 - Sponge bathe small children.
 - Wrap splint/cast with a plastic bag or wrapping.
 - Do not immerse splint/cast in bath.
 - Hold splint/cast outside of the tub.
 - Showers are not recommended.
- If the cast gets wet, dry the inside as much as possible with a hairdryer on **COOL** air setting. **DO NOT USE HEAT.**

Activity

- Rest and elevate your surgical extremity for the first 24 hours.
 - Use a pillow under your calf and ankle. Never place a pillow under your knee or heel.

- Use your crutches while walking and remain non-weight bearing on the surgical leg unless instructed otherwise by the physician.
- Physical therapy will be arranged depending on the specifics of your surgery.
 - They will guide you in exercises to perform while in the clinic and at home.

Cryotherapy

- Icing is very important to decrease swelling and pain, and improve mobility.
- You may be provided with a cryocuff.
 - Keep cold therapy cuff on at all times for the first 24 hours after surgery.
 - Refill with cold water every hour while awake.
 - After 24 hours, continue to use the cuff 3-4 times a day, 15-20 minutes each time.
 - 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.**
- If a cryocuff is not provided, please use ice for 20 minutes each hour over surgical site. **DO NOT PLACE DIRECTLY ON SKIN.**

Medications

- You will be given a narcotic pain medication. This should be taken as needed every 4-6 hours for pain. Take with a little food.
- We recommend purchasing an over-the-counter stool softener (such as colace) to take as directed while taking narcotics to prevent constipation.
- If given a prescription for an anti-inflammatory, such as Motrin or Naproxen take as directed. Take with food.

Local Nerve Block

- You may have received an injection into your leg to block the pain temporarily due to surgery.
- This should help relieve much of your pain for about 8-12 hours but may NOT control all of your pain.
- If this block numbs your foot for surgery, make sure you do not place objects directly under your heel for support – this may cause a pressure sore or infection.
- If you were given a brace, you must wear it and use crutches until advised by your physician.
- The anesthesiologist will discuss this procedure in more detail with you on the day of surgery.

Post-Op Office Appointment

- If the appointment was not arranged prior to surgery, please contact the office at 713-486-1820.

Emergencies or Concerns

- Contact us at 713-486-1820 or go to the nearest emergency room.
 - Pain worsens or does not go away after pain medication is taken.
 - Redness or swelling in your thigh or calf that will not decrease.
 - Difficulties moving your toes.
 - Develop a fever greater than 101.4 degrees.
- Please note that refills on pain medication will not be approved during evenings or on weekends.