

Essex Union Podiatry Post Operative Bone Surgery Instructions

Bone Surgery takes approximately 6 weeks for the bone to heal and mend, and the total recovery may last 8-12 weeks. The postoperative protocol and may include strict non-weightbearing for 6 weeks, or may involve protected early weightbearing as soon as 2 weeks after the surgery. The decision for an early weightbearing program depends on the stability of the fixation used to correct the bone deformity. In any case, do not put weight on the foot until instructed by your surgeon.

Postoperative Overview

The following overview provides information regarding what a patient can expect to happen after bone surgery.

Day of Bone Surgery

- The operative extremity will be often be placed in splint (soft cast) or Cam Boot.
- You will need to be non-weightbearing with crutches in order to control pain and prevent damage to the operated site
- Elevate the operative extremity when in bed
- Keep foot Dry
- Take Pain Medications as prescribed when the anesthetic sensation is wearing off.

1 week Postoperative Visit

- The post operative bandage and any splinting will be removed
- The incisions will be checked for healing and for presence of any infections
- A fresh postoperative dressing will be applied.
- A CAM walker will be dispensed if indicated.

2 week Postoperative Visit

- X-rays may be needed
- Sutures are removed if needed.
- A CAM walker may be placed on the operative extremity
- You may be allowed to start putting weight on the foot

6 weeks Postoperative Visit

- X-rays to assess healing of the bone
- A stiff sole surgical shoe is placed on the operative foot
- You will likely be allowed to put full weight on the foot
- After 2-weeks in the surgical shoes, you may transition into a stable tennis shoe

12 weeks Postoperative Visit

- X-rays to assess healing of the bone
- By this visit you should already be back in regular shoes, and activity as usual.

Important Considerations

- **Pain Medicine.** An oral pain medicine will be prescribed to take after your surgery. You will be given the prescription at the surgical appointment. Take the pain medicine as only prescribed. The most discomfort bone surgery peaks within the first 72 hours, with each day being more comfortable than the last. If you do not need the pain prescription after the first 72 hours transition to Motrin or Tylenol.
- **Assistive Non-weightbearing Devices.** There is a period of non-weightbearing on the operative extremity after Bone surgery of 2 – 6 weeks, as determined by your surgeon. Crutches should be used to keep weight off of the operative foot, and these will be given to you at surgery center. Other commonly used devices are a walker and/or wheelchair and you specifically specify if you want to use these items post-operatively. Alternatively, you may use a specialized cushioned roller that allows for bearing weight on the knee, and this is available on to rent off of the internet (www.roll-a-bout.com).
- **Applying Ice After Surgery.** Icing of the operate site is another method used to decrease swelling and pain. Cold packs or ice should be applied to the surgical site following surgery. Cold packs are preferred because they do not leak. You should apply the cold pack (or ice) intermittently for 15-20 minutes at a time several times per day, during waking hours. Do not apply cold packs directly on the skin.

- **Limb Elevation to Limit Swelling after Surgery.** It is important to elevate the operated limb after surgery to limit swelling of the foot. Excessive swelling may cause complications and interfere with healing, and prolong recovery. After the Surgery, the limb should be elevated while in bed with 1-2 pillows, at or above the level of your heart. For the first two-weeks following surgery, you should avoid putting your limb down for longer than periods of 15-30 minutes.
- **Showering & Bathing.** Splints, casts and surgical dressings must be kept dry after the surgery. Water-resistant protective covers may be used when showering and bathing, and these may be purchased separately (www.xerosox.com). Once any splints and casts are off, the extremity may be washed and submerged in water.
- **Big Toe Joint Exercises.** It is important to move the big toe joint after surgery to prevent the joint from becoming stiff. You should start performing exercises of the big toe joint on the first postoperative day, and this involves simply wiggling the big toe and discomfort is normal.
- **Foot Swelling Reduction.** Swelling is common after foot surgery, and begins to subside once the splint/cast is removed and the foot can be mobilized. Performing gentle range of motion exercises of the ankle is beneficial in swelling reduction and promoting blood flow. These exercises involve moving the foot up/down, forward and reverse circles, and tracing the alphabet with the foot.
- **Nutrition & Healing.** Proper nutrition is critical optimal healing from of the skin to the bones. Proper amounts of Vitamin C, Zinc, Pathotenic Acid, Vitamin D and Calcium are recommended to assist the healing process of the body.