



West Bay Orthopaedic Associates, Inc.

Anthony P. Mechrefe, M.D.

120 Centerville Road
Warwick, RI 02886-4336
Tel: 401.738.7370
Fax: 401.738.3777

Arthroscopy Post-Operative Instructions

ANESTHESIA: If you had general anesthesia, you may experience nausea, fatigue, or mild confusion for the next 24-48 hours. Someone else should be responsible for driving you home and assisting you during the initial recovery period. If you received nerve block or local anesthesia during your surgery, you may be unable to move your foot, ankle, and/or lower leg because of weakness, and you may have numbness. This can last up to 12-18 hours. Protect your foot/ankle/knee and wear the boot, shoe, splint, or simple dressing provided to you.

MEDICATION: You have been given a prescription for narcotic pain medication which should relieve a large portion of your discomfort but, will not relieve all of it. After any operation, a certain degree of pain is to be expected. **To avoid being too uncomfortable when this happens,** you should begin taking the pain medication as prescribed *as soon as you receive it, as instructed.* Do not drink alcohol, drive a car, or operate hazardous machinery when taking the pain medication. To minimize constipation, you may augment any laxative prescription you receive with over the counter treatments or food/drink that counteract this (e.g., prune juice) if necessary. If you experience reactions such as rash, upset stomach, trouble breathing, or confusion, stop your medication and call the office or your medical doctor immediately for assistance.

ACTIVITY: Unless otherwise instructed after surgery, you should remain non-weight bearing on the operated extremity, using crutches and keeping the extremity elevated at or just above your heart as much as possible **to minimize wound problems, infection, swelling, and pain.** Appropriate elevation of the foot/ankle means having this area just at or above the level of the heart. Avoid strenuous activities which will increase the pain and swelling you experience, such as stair climbing or prolonged walking/standing. Begin tightening thigh muscles and doing straight leg raises as tolerated. These exercises will minimize deconditioning and **help protect against blood clots.** Whatever form of protection has been put on your leg should be worn at all times for the first 5 days after surgery. It is protecting your repair. After that, you may take your foot/ankle/knee out of it to do range of motion ankle exercises such as spelling the alphabet, and gentle knee flexion and extension. This can be done 5 times a day, replacing the immobilization after each time until you are seen in the office in follow-up.

WOUND CARE: Some fluid drainage after arthroscopy is expected. If you feel your bandage has become too tight, **the most common cause is over-activity or lack of elevation.** A short period of elevation and rest usually relieves this sensation. If it continues to be a problem you should call our office. **Avoid** getting the original dressing and bandage wet or dirty, which can increase your chances of infection. Your dressings may be removed 5 days after surgery. After this, you should apply another sterile gauze dressing over each incision and wrap it with an ace bandage. If you were also initially provided with a brace, boot, or shoe, you should then use it on top of this new dressing. Showers are permitted before bandage removal *provided* you adequately cover and protect the leg from any dampness. This can be done by carefully covering the extremity with an impermeable plastic bag and heavy tape. After bandage removal, keep the incisions clean and dry, and **do not** apply any topical ointments. Avoid baths, soaks, pools and jacuzzis! Also, avoid any irritation of the incisions by carefully recovering and protecting them.

DIET: Begin with liquids and light foods (jello, soup), and then progress to a normal diet as tolerated.

PROBLEMS: Call the office at 738-3730 during the day if you experience any of the following: fever or chills, increasing swelling or numbness, pain uncontrollable by appropriate medication use, expanding drainage or a soaked dressing, or any worrisome condition. If an emergency arises and you are not able to contact me or the office, or if it is after business hours, please call 737-7000 and ask the Kent County Hospital operator to contact the on-call physician for West Bay Orthopedics.

FOLLOW-UP: An appointment for follow-up should have already been made with you to be seen roughly 2 weeks after surgery in the office. Please call the office as soon as possible to confirm. At the time of follow-up, the findings at surgery will be reviewed with you, and you will probably be asked to undergo physical therapy. All of our physical therapists have received special training in the care of the foot, ankle, and lower extremity. We look forward to you having a great surgical experience and a rapid recovery!