



## Anthony A. Ferguson, MD

# Surgery Instructions

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### Before Surgery:

- Call the office to make, or confirm, your follow-up appointment after surgery.
  - Make sure you have a plan for daily activities after surgery (e.g., shopping, preparing meals, driving, tending to children and pets).
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### Medications:

- After surgery, you may receive a narcotic pain medication to help with postoperative pain. The goal is to use as little of this type of medication as possible. There are federal and state narcotic prescribing guidelines that we must and will follow. In only very rare circumstances will our office ever refill a narcotic prescription. Under no circumstances will any medications be ordered after office hours or on weekends/holidays.
  - If you have any questions as to whether or not it is safe for you to take any of the following medications, contact your primary care doctor's office well before surgery.
  - For the first 2-3 days after surgery, the plan for most patients will be to take the following three over-the-counter medications as clarified on the instructions given to you from the Orthopaedic Hospital. Buy these from the pharmacy before surgery:
    - Acetaminophen (Tylenol) 325mg 2 tablets every 4 hours around the clock
    - Ibuprofen 200mg 2 tablets every 4 hours around the clock
    - Aspirin 81mg once or twice a day for 14 days (once or twice a day as clarified on your discharge instructions from the hospital)
  - Alternating Tylenol and Ibuprofen is ideal and allows you to take something every two hours.
  - Tylenol, Ibuprofen and Aspirin are also safe and effective when taken together. They do not have negative interactions with each other. **You will take all three medications as directed above unless there are medical reasons preventing it. Clarify with your primary physician if in doubt.**
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### Nerve Blocks:

- If you received a nerve block at surgery, some body parts might remain numb for some time, occasionally several days. This is expected. You may feel uncomfortable so don't become anxious.
  - When the nerve block begins to wear off, it usually does so randomly. However, some patients find they "wake up" all at once. Both reactions are normal.
  - Expect pain after the block. This is normal. Getting anxious only worsens pain.
  - If you are numb and not having pain, continue taking the Tylenol, Ibuprofen and Aspirin, as directed.
  - If you are not having pain, do not take the narcotic. Many patients fully recover after surgery without taking them.
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### Dressings:

- Read the discharge instructions given after surgery.

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### Medical Equipment:

- If you have crutches, a walker, or a knee scooter, bring them to surgery.
- If you are put into a boot, **DO NOT REMOVE THE BOOT AT ANY TIME** unless clearly instructed to do so in your discharge instructions. You must sleep in the boot.
- Follow the instructions as to how much weight you are allowed to put down on the foot after surgery. If you are non-weight bearing, it is safe to rest the foot on the ground for balance.

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### Showering:

- Read the discharge instructions. If instructed to keep the boot and/or dressing dry, then **KEEP IT DRY**.
- The hospital may supply you with a shower bag to protect the surgical site. However, do not trust the bag alone. We recommend multiple layers of plastic kitchen wrap over the top of the bag to prevent potential leaks. When in doubt, don't shower. Just sponge bath.

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### Elevation:

- Elevating the foot and leg is absolutely critical after surgery.
- Our definition of correct elevation:
  - If the foot and ankle are not above the level of the heart, it is not elevated.
  - We like to use the phrase, "Toes above the nose."
- Failure to elevate properly often makes postoperative pain intensify.
- Improper elevation causes significantly increased swelling, thus inhibiting healing which can lead to serious complications.
- Proper elevation is important. You are only hurting yourself by failing to do so. The difference between those who comply and those who don't is obvious. We want the best for you so please keep it above the heart. Think of the plumbing in your home. Water only flows downhill, and the swelling must drain back to your heart. It is that simple.

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### Activity and Exercise:

- Perform the simple therapy exercises taught to you the day of surgery.
- Get up and move around for 10-15 minutes every 1-2 hours. Then elevate the foot again.
- Do simple activities like making a sandwich or unloading the dishwasher. Then get back to elevating.
- It is fine to do very light, simple upper body and core exercises, but do not overdo. Raising your heart rate and blood pressure excessively by exercising may result in more pain and swelling at your surgical site. Ask Dr. Ferguson during your follow-up visit when exercise is safe and appropriate.

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### Ice:

- Icing is very important. Follow the discharge instructions given at surgery.
- If in a boot it is fine to put the ice over the boot but make sure the boot stays dry.
- Placing ice behind the knee can also help relieve pain, especially when wearing a boot.



### Anthony A. Ferguson, MD

Foot & Ankle • Sports Medicine • General Orthopedics • Orthopedic Surgery

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Dr. Ferguson practices general orthopedics with an emphasis on foot and ankle conditions. His clinical interests include ankle arthroscopy, sports injuries, fractures, reconstructive surgery, and workers comp injuries. He is fellowship-trained in complex foot and ankle issues. By individualizing their treatment, his patients can make informed choices regarding all care options, not just surgery.

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