

## Postoperative Instructions: Ankle Syndesmosis Screw Removal

### When you get home:

Rest for the remainder of the day.

Be Safe- stay in the care of responsible adult the first 24 hours.

Elevate the leg as much as possible, above heart level.

Use Ice as much as possible. Place over the top of the foot. Some of it may not reach the ankle, but it is still beneficial.  
20 minutes on/20 minutes off for regular ice packs.

If you are using a cold therapy machine, use it according to the manufacturer's instructions.

### Pain Medication:

Take your pain medication- it's better to stay ahead of the pain.

Oral Narcotic pain medicines (Vicodin, Norco, Percocet, Ultram, Codeine) help with pain, but can cause:

Drowsiness: Be Safe, don't drive, operative machinery, don't mix it with alcohol.

Stomach upset: Take with food, or try over the counter Zantac or Tums.

Constipation: Drink enough fluids, use fiber supplements (Metamucil, Senokot)

Take Milk of Magnesia or prune juice if still constipated after 2 days

You may take anti-inflammatory medication to help with pain and swelling.

Some patients are prescribed Toradol (Ketorolac): take every 6 hours for 4 days.

Ok to take with Pain Medications, not with other anti-inflammatories

After 4 days of Toradol, you can take other anti-inflammatory medicines like:

Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), Naproxen (Aleve), Lodine, Mobic, Celebrex

Go easy on the anti-inflammatory medications if you have stomach problems.

### Activities and Restrictions:

You can start putting weight on the ankle, using your cast boot walker.

We'll start some exercises in physical therapy after your first postop visit in one week.

After 4 weeks, we'll plan to let you discontinue the cast boot walker.

Physical therapy will continue for about 3-4 weeks after that, to regain strength and coordination.

Returning to sports happens at about the 4 month mark.

Driving: Only after you are SAFE, which means:

Off pain medications.

Able to control a vehicle safely- get foot from gas to brake and press hard.

Usually takes about 3-4 weeks, sometimes longer.

Safety first- Use your best judgment. It is difficult to drive if the Right ankle is the surgical side.

### Exercises:

Begin gentle exercises immediately:

Tighten and release your thigh and calf muscles (called Isometric Exercises).

Move the knee and hip gently to keep them from getting stiff.

These exercises help prevent blood clots in the leg.

### Dressing and Wound Care:

Keep the postoperative splint clean and dry.

You may take a shower, but use a heavy plastic bag and tap the top around the leg to keep water from getting in.

Use a shower chair or plastic patio chair to sit on in the shower.

On the other leg, keep using the white stocking on your other leg for at least 2-3 days. It helps to prevent blood clots.

### Problems or Questions? Call us at 925.600.7020

Feel free to call us if you have any concerns, or if you have any:

Unrelenting pain, or increasing swelling or numbness, or high fever (above 101.5)

Continuous drainage or bleeding that is soaking your dressing/bandage.

Chest pain, shortness of breath