



Edward S. Chang, MD  
Board Certified Orthopedic Sports Medicine Surgeon

Inova Orthopaedics  
and Sports Medicine

#### **OFFICE LOCATIONS**

8100 Innovation Park  
Drive  
Fairfax, VA 22031  
T 703-970-6464  
F 703-970-6465

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1005 N. Glebe Rd  
Suite 410  
Arlington, VA 22201  
T 571-414-6940  
F 703-970-6465

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6355 Walker Lane  
Suite 300  
Alexandria, VA 22310  
T 703-797-6980  
F 703-797-6981

#### **CLINICAL NURSE**

Eileen Perri, BSN  
(703) 797-6918

## **Post-Operative Instructions Following Ankle Fracture Open Reduction Internal Fixation**

### **COMFORT**

#### **1. Elevation**

With your knee straight, elevate your knee and ankle above the level of your heart. The best way is to lie down with a minimum of two pillows lengthwise under your entire lower leg. This should be done as much as possible, especially in the first 3-5 days following surgery.

### **MEDICATIONS**

#### **1. Pain Medication**

You will be prescribed a narcotic pain medication. Please take as prescribed and only as often as necessary. If you had a regional block performed, it is recommended you start taking medication when you regain sensation in your toes. Avoid alcohol and driving while on these medications.

#### **2. Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatories (NSAIDs) (Over the Counter)**

If you have severe pain, you may take one or two Ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin) or 1 Naproxen (Aleve) in between dosage of pain medication.

#### **3. Aspirin (Prevention of Blood Clots)**

Take one adult aspirin (325 mg) daily for 4 weeks starting the day AFTER surgery. Please discontinue NSAIDs once you are on Aspirin. This is to help prevent blood clots after surgery.

#### **4. Antibiotics**

Antibiotics may be prescribed. Please take one once you return home from surgery and finish the bottle as directed.

#### **5. Colace (Over the Counter)**

Constipation following surgery is common. You may take a stool softener such as Colace. If constipation lasts more than 3 days, you may take over the counter laxatives such as Milk of Magnesia, Bisacodyl, or Miralax). If symptoms persist, please contact your primary care doctor

### **ACTIVITIES**

#### **1. Exercises**

These help prevent complications such as blood clotting in your legs.

- a. **Toe Wiggle**- please wiggle your toes starting the day of the operation every 1-2 hours while you are awake.



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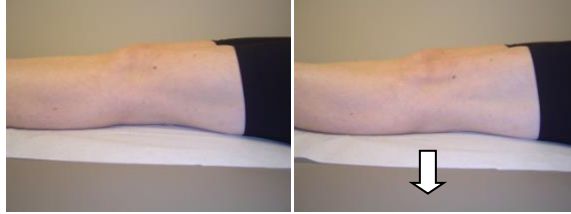
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b. **Quadriceps Isometrics (Quad Sets):** Lie flat or sit with your surgical leg straight. Tighten the muscle in the front of your thigh as much as you can, pushing the back of your knee flat against the bed/floor. Hold this tight for 5 seconds and relax. Perform this 10-15 repetitions , 3 times a day.



### **2. Weight Bearing Status**

You **CANNOT** bear any weight on your operative leg. Two crutches or a knee scooter will be necessary during this phase of your recovery.

### **3. Physical Therapy**

PT should be started after approximately 2 weeks (if you had ankle fracture surgery) or 4 weeks (Achilles Tendon Surgery) after surgery, once you are out of the splint/cast. If you have not already scheduled your physical therapy appointment, please do so as soon as possible. A rehab protocol will be provided at your follow up visit and should be given to the therapist at your first session.

### **4. Driving**

Driving is **NOT** permitted for 6-8 weeks following surgery on the right lower extremity. You may drive following left sided surgery following your first post-operative visit with Dr. Chang. You must be **off** narcotic pain medication to safely operate a vehicle.

### **5. Athletic Activities**

Athletics including swimming, cycling, jogging, running and stop and go sports **MAY NOT** be resumed until you are cleared by Dr. Chang.

### **6. Return to Work**

Your ability to work depends on a number of factors including your level of discomfort and how demanding your job is. If you have any questions or concerns about working, please discuss these issues with Dr. Chang during your first post-op visit.

### SPLINT CARE

1. Keep the splint/cast clean and dry until your first postoperative visit with Dr. Chang, approximately 2 weeks after surgery

2. You may shower 2-3 days after surgery. You must keep the splint/cast **DRY**. Place your leg in a clean plastic bag (or cast bag that you can purchase at a drug store). Securely tape the open end of the bag to your leg. You must sit on a shower bench or a sturdy chair or stool for safety. **DO NOT** bear weight on your operative leg (cont.).



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Sit on the chair or bench, shower and then dry off before standing. Remove the plastic bag covering your leg immediately after showering.

3. Baths/Soaking/Swimming should be avoided for 3 months following surgery.

**EATING**

Your first few meals after surgery should include light, easily digestible foods and plenty of liquids as some people experience nausea as a temporary reaction to anesthesia.

**CALL YOUR PHYSICIAN IF:**

1. Pain in the back of your ankle persists or worsens in the first few days after surgery.
2. Excessive redness or drainage of cloudy or bloody material from the wounds (clear red tinted fluid and some mild drainage should be expected). New drainage of any kind 5 days after surgery should be reported.
3. You have a temperature greater than 101 F.
4. You have pain, swelling or redness in your calf.
5. You have numbness or weakness in your leg or foot.
6. You have any foul-smelling drainage from the dressing/splint.

**Business Hours:** Please call our clinical nurse (703) 797-6918.

**After hours:** You may call (703) 797-6980 during non-business hours to reach the answering service. Problems requiring immediate attention are then forwarded to the medical staff.

**RETURN TO THE OFFICE**

1. You may return to see Dr. Chang 14-17 days after your surgery. If you have not made your postoperative appointment already, please call (703) 797-6980. Please confirm the office location as Dr. Chang sees patients in multiple locations.