



## GLACIER FOOT AND ANKLE ASSOCIATES

125 W Washington St Kalispell MT 59901

406-755-1300

406-752-8346 fax

www.glacierfootandankle.com

Erik Ploot, DPM

### **POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS**

The following instructions are general guidelines. Please follow all post operative instructions in order to minimize pain and swelling, and reduce potential complications. Minimize all activity for the first 48-72 hrs after surgery.

- Keep the surgical dressing clean and dry. Do not remove the bandages yourself. You may loosen the bandages if they become tight from swelling and cause excessive pain.
- Stay off your feet. Avoid walking or standing. Elevate the foot. If the foot begins to throb, it may indicate swelling due to excess activity; lie down and elevate the leg above heart level for 15 - 30 minutes several times per day. Be sure to support underneath your knee with a pillow.
- To reduce the potential for a blood clot - exercise the leg to stimulate blood flow. Bend the knee and move the leg for about 5 minutes each hour. *Patients at risk for a DVT (deep venous thrombosis) should take additional preventive measures and need to discuss this with their surgeon pre-operatively.* Notify your surgeon immediately if you experience any sudden calf / leg pain or chest pain / shortness of breath.
- It is important to get plenty of rest. Get help from family or friends.
- Drink plenty of fluids and eat well. Following anesthesia, begin with liquids and return to regular diet as tolerated. Gatorade may help to decrease post-op nausea.
- Take post-operative medications as prescribed. If you have any unfavorable side effects, stop taking the medication and contact your surgeon. Take medications with food. Do not drink alcohol or drive while taking narcotic pain medications.
- Begin post-op pain medications before pain develops. Due to the use of local anesthetics, the foot/ankle may be numb well into the evening. Begin pain medication before the local anesthetic begins to wear off. Begin the medication when going to bed (even if the foot is still numb), to stay ahead of the pain and avoid waking up with pain in the middle of the night. Pain usually begins to decrease significantly 48-72 hours after surgery.
- Walk or bear weight on the foot only as instructed. Patients instructed to remain non-weight bearing must stay off the foot entirely using either crutches or a walker (practice with crutches / walker before surgery). Wear the post-op shoe or cast while using crutches to protect the foot against any accidental slip or fall. Be careful with stairs.

### **\*\* CALL YOUR SURGEON IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING OCCURS \*\***

- 1) Bandages become dirty and/or wet - this may lead to infection.
- 2) Your dressing or cast feels too tight, toes become numb or change color – this may lead to nerve or vascular injury.
- 3) If you notice any redness or swelling extending up from the ankle or a painful lump behind your knee or in your groin – this may indicate infection.
- 4) If you begin having fever or chills.
- 5) Notify your surgeon immediately if you should experience any sudden calf / leg pain – this may indicate a blood clot. If you experience sudden chest pain or shortness of breath, present to your nearest Emergency Room. A serious blood clot is actually more likely to occur a couple weeks after a surgery than in the immediate post-op period.

Call Glacier Foot and Ankle Associates at 755-1300 if you have ANY problems or concerns at any time.