

Post Surgical Tips and Pearls for Bunion surgeries

- 1) **Be patient, it will get better.**
- 2) You have to be in the hospital 1.5 -3 hours ahead of time. The average procedure takes approximately 30 -60 minutes, then recovery room for about an hour. Total time approximately 4-5 hours (estimation only).
- 3) The anesthesiologist will talk to you about a pain block – an injection behind your knee. This is a great way to have very good pain control when you leave the hospital, and it might last for 12-24 hours. There is a very slight possibility that there will be areas on your foot that will stay numb for much longer than that.
- 4) Take the pain medication immediately the moment you feel any sensation in your foot, or before you go to bed if there is still no sensation. You don't want to wake up in the middle of the night, in pain, when the block wears off.
- 5) **Keep your foot elevated whenever you can in the first week.**
- 6) **Be patient, it will get better**
- 7) You will not be moving much the first couple of days and will need assistance. You can be “weight bearing as tolerated” but in reality plan to have help around for the first day or two. You are only allowed to put weight on your heel, not the forefoot. Start with crutches. Some people can get off the crutches and walk on their heel only; others feel they need the crutches for a longer time. There are not set rules.
- 8) It is not uncommon or unusual to bleed after surgery. Have extra gauze and place it between the toes and the bottom of the shoe to help soak up some of the blood. Keeping the foot elevated the first day also help to reduce bleeding. If it becomes too messy, let us know and the bandages will be replaced before the 2 week visit.
- 9) Keep the foot dry when showering or bathing during the first 2 weeks. After that the bandage/bunion splint can be removed when showering/bathing.
- 10) The bandages and sutures will be removed at two weeks. You will receive a soft bunion splint that you should use 23 hours a day. If comfortable, you can sleep only with the splint, and without the shoe.
- 11) The bunion splints you will receive at the 2 week visit can be washed and dried. Even so, having 2 might be beneficial. You might want more padding in the shoe after the initial 2 weeks; an extra sock may help.

- 12) X-ray will be done at six weeks; if everything looks fine physical therapy will start.
Physical therapy can be done close to home or work. It is good to arrange this ahead of time to ensure a start date soon after the 6 week mark. It is usually once or twice a week for 4-6 weeks. The idea is to regain confidence, range of motion and reduction of swelling. Avoid going up on your toes for another 6 weeks.
- 13) Normal walking will not be a part of your routine for at least 8 weeks after surgery.
Expect mild pain and restriction of movement (bending) of the toes for 8 weeks or more.
Normal shoes may not be possible for 8-16 weeks after surgery depending on swelling.
- 14) You can request a handicapped parking permit from our office.
- 15) You may experience sore hands/shoulders from using crutches. A tote bag for carrying things while on crutches may be helpful. If crutch-walking is difficult, consider using a "Roll-about". We have information about it at the office.
- 16) **Expect discomfort, the toes have been surgically realigned. It is normal to have some discomfort for up to 6 months after surgery. To have swelling and/or numbness can last for several months. Your feet take the brunt of any and all physical activity – therefore the slow recovery.**
- 17) **Elevate your foot whenever you can for the first 6 months after surgery – it is a simple way to reduce swelling and discomfort.**
- 18) If you can, get a pedicure after your bandages are removed. It removes all the dead skin, gets the circulation going and makes you feel so much better.
- 19) Baby oil will remove the yellow antiseptic wash on the legs.
- 20) **Be patient, it will get better!**

With the help of Kate White and Elizabeth Clark– previous recipients of a bunion repairs.
Comments/additions are welcomed.

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