

General Post-Operative Instructions Compartment Release - Chronic Exertional Compartment Syndrome

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WOUND CARE:

- After surgery, your leg will typically be placed in a soft dressing. This should be left in place for 24-48 hours.
- Skin stitches or staples will be removed at your first post-op appointment (usually about 2 weeks after surgery)
- You may take a shower after surgery once you remove your dressing. You can let water run directly over your incisions. Once done showering, pat dry your incisions and re-dress the wounds.
- Do not submerge the wound in water (bath, pool, lake) until it has completely healed.

ICING & ELEVATION:

- Icing is an important part of recovery from surgery. It is used to decrease swelling and inflammation. Apply ice for 20 minutes every hour.
- You may apply ice over the top of the dressing. Be sure not to let the dressing get wet.
- Keeping your leg elevated above your heart will also help decrease swelling. This is one of the most important parts of recovery and pain control. Remember, "Toes above your nose."

MEDICATION:

- Most home medications may be resumed the evening of surgery or the following day unless specifically directed by your surgeon.
- Typically, patients are given a prescription for pain medication. Take this medication as instructed.
- Try to take pain medication with food to help decrease nausea.
- Some prescribed pain medication may already have Tylenol (Acetaminophen) mixed with it. Do not take any other medications that include Tylenol while taking these pain medications. Taking too much Tylenol can cause liver damage.
- Taking pain medication prior to bedtime may help with sleeping.
- Do not drink alcohol or drive while taking narcotic pain medication (hydrocodone, oxycodone, dilaudid, etc.).
 - Pain medication typically takes about 30-45 minutes to take effect. Don't wait until pain is severe to take pain medication.

- Some patients may receive a nerve block prior to surgery. This block lasts a different length of time in each patient, but typically lasts 12-18 hours. When you begin to feel some tingling in the extremity, the block is beginning to wear off. This is a good time to begin taking oral pain medication.
- Pain medication will likely not take away all of your pain. It is okay to have some discomfort.
- Because of the risks of prolonged narcotic use, in most cases narcotic pain medication will not be prescribed after 6 weeks from surgery. Plan to wean narcotic use after surgery accordingly.

ACTIVITY:

- Crutches, a walker, a knee scooter or a wheelchair will need to be used initially after surgery.
- You will usually be allowed to bear weight as tolerated after surgery.
- Return to work depends on your job requirements, specifics of your surgery and pain/swelling levels. This can be discussed at your follow-up appointment.
- Physical therapy may be prescribed after surgery. This is an important part of your recovery and we encourage patients to attend all physical therapy appointments.
- Return to driving after surgery is okay once narcotic pain medication has been stopped and you are cleared by your surgeon. The length of time until patients are able to return to driving varies depending on the specific surgery and which leg is involved.

BLOOD CLOT PREVENTION:

- Though uncommon, blood clots (also called deep vein thrombosis or DVT) can occur after surgery. To decrease the risk of this problem, you should flex your ankle and toes up and down ten times per hour for the first 2-3 weeks after surgery.
- Elevation of the operative leg also helps decrease swelling and prevent blood clots.
- Most patients will be instructed to take aspirin daily for 6 weeks after surgery.
- Be sure to let your surgeon know if you have a history of blood clots.

REASON TO CALL THE OFFICE:

Please call the office for any of these concerns:

- Fever above 101.5°F
- Excess pain or swelling of the calf
- Excess drainage at surgical incisions
- Worsening pain in the operative leg not controlled with medication
- Excess nausea/vomiting

- Numbness in the operative leg
 - Some numbness can be expected initially after surgery if a nerve block was used
- Redness around the incision site
- Any other questions or concerns

FOLLOW UP APPOINTMENT:

- A post-operative follow-up appointment will be made for you at the time your surgery is scheduled for 2 weeks after surgery. If you do not have an appointment scheduled after surgery, please call our office.