



Postoperative Instructions: Ankle Arthroscopy

Please read these instructions thoroughly. Most of your questions will be addressed here. The first page is a summary. You can find additional details on the following pages. Following these precautions will help minimize complications and address concerns about your surgery. Additional information can be found at www.bradleysmithmd.com.

SUMMARY PAGE

Weight-bearing status: Weight-bearing as tolerated on the operative extremity. Use crutches or a walker to assist when walking. If you have been given a walking boot, wear this when you are walking.

Range of Motion: Progress as tolerated

Standard Medications:

Oxycodone 5 mg: 1-2 tabs by mouth every 4-6 hours as needed for severe pain.

Tylenol 325 mg: we recommend 2 tabs (650 mg) every 6 hours until your pain is low enough for you to switch to taking this as needed.

Aleve 220 mg (Naproxen): we recommend 2 tabs every 12 hours for the first 5 days after surgery.

Aspirin 81 mg: 1 tab two times per day for 14 days to reduce the risk of blood clots.

Pain control:

You may have received a nerve block for postoperative pain control. We recommend that you start your pain medication when you get home from the hospital. Continue the medication for the first 1-2 days until the block wears off and you have a better idea of how you will handle the pain. Keep your leg **elevated** and use **ice** as much as possible to help with pain and swelling.

Follow up: 10-14 days



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Pain Control and Medications

You may have received a nerve block or a local anesthetic injection to help with pain control. This will likely wear off 8-12 hours after surgery. You should start taking pain medication when you get home and before you go to sleep so that you have something working before the block wears off. Otherwise the pain can be difficult to control. Typically, pain is the worst during the first 2-3 days after surgery before starting to subside.

Medications:

Prescription:

- Oxycodone 5 mg: this is a strong narcotic medication. You may take up to 1-2 tablets every 4-6 hours AS NEEDED for the first few days after surgery. After 2-4 days, you should be able to space out or discontinue this medication. Do not drive or drink alcohol while taking this medication.

Over-the-counter:

- Tylenol (Acetaminophen) 325 mg: this is a strong non-narcotic medication for pain. You should take 2 tablets (650 mg) every 6 hours. This can be taken with the oxycodone, and can reduce the amount of oxycodone that you need to reduce your pain.
- Aleve (Naproxen) 220 mg: this is a strong anti-inflammatory medication. We recommend that you take 2 tablets (440 mg) every 12 hours with meals for the first 5 days after surgery. Do **NOT** take this medication if you have a history of gastric ulcers or sensitivity to other anti-inflammatory medications.
- Aspirin 81 mg: this medication is to help prevent blood clots after surgery. Please take 81 mg two times daily for a total of 2 weeks after surgery.

If you have any side effects (i.e. nausea, rash, trouble breathing) from a medication, discontinue its use and call our office. Constipation is common after surgery and while you are taking narcotics for pain control. Drink plenty of clear liquids, and consider using an over-the-counter stool softener such as Docusate or Miralax.



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Wound Care and Showering

- Leave the surgical bandages on and do not shower for 48 HOURS.
- It is normal for the joint to bleed and swell following surgery – if blood soaks onto the ACE bandage, simply reinforce with additional gauze dressing for the remainder of day and check again.
- The ACE bandage can be laundered in normal fashion and reused.
- You may loosen the bandage if swelling or progressive numbness occurs in the extremity.
- After 48 hours, remove bandages and gauze. It is normal to see bloody fluid on the gauze sponges.
- If you have steri-strips, leave them in place over the incisions until your first appointment.
- After removing the dressing, you may shower. You can get the incisions wet in the shower and let water run over the incisions. Gently pat the incisions dry when done, and cover the incisions with band-aids.
- Do NOT use Bacitracin, lotions, or other ointments to the incisions.
- Do NOT soak incisions in any pool/bathwater until 3 weeks postoperatively or until your incisions are completely closed.
- Do not allow pets to sit on your lap or sleep in your bed for at least 4 weeks following surgery. Pets may harbor flies, mites, or other organisms that may cause an infection

Physical Therapy

- Physical therapy is not always necessary after arthroscopic ankle surgery. The need for physical therapy will be discussed at your first postoperative appointment.
- You may progress your ankle range of motion as tolerated.

Activity

- Try and rest for the first few days following surgery.
- You may weight-bear as tolerated after surgery.
- If you have been given a walking boot, wear this when ambulating until your follow up appointment.
 - You may remove the boot when resting/sleeping
- **Crutches or a walker** are recommended for the first 3-5 days to help provide support and aid in ambulation.
- You may return to (sedentary) work or school 2-3 days after surgery if pain is tolerable. Return to heavy labor or excessive ambulatory activities will be determined by Dr. Smith.



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Ice and Elevation

- YOU WILL have swelling after surgery. You may even have swelling into your foot. That is NORMAL.
- When sitting or lying down be sure to keep your leg elevated up above the level of your heart to help decrease swelling. Also continue to do ankle pumps to help with blood flow.
- **Ice** should be used as much as possible for the first 3-4 weeks to help decrease swelling. Ice can be placed over the splint and left until it melts. You can also put ice behind your knee.
- Do not put ice directly on the skin.

Follow-Up

- Please contact the office to schedule an appointment 10-14 days after your surgery.
- You will be seen by Dr. Smith for your first postoperative visit to review your intraoperative findings and to go over any questions you may have.
- The splint and sutures will also be removed at that time.

Driving

- Do not drive a car or operate machinery while taking narcotic pain medication.
- Driving is not recommended if you had right ankle surgery until you are walking comfortably in a normal shoe. This may take 2-4 weeks after ankle surgery.

When to call for help

Call 911 anytime you think you may need emergency care. For example, call if:

- You pass out (lose consciousness).
- You have severe trouble breathing.
- You have sudden chest pain and shortness of breath, or you cough up blood.
- You have severe nausea or vomiting.

Call the office if:

- You have pain that does not go away after you take pain pills.
- You have a fever over 101.3°F.
- You have loose stitches, or your incision comes open.
- Your incision keeps bleeding 3 days after your surgery.
- You have signs of infection, such as redness around the incision or pus draining from your incision.



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