







## **ANKLE ARTHRODESIS (FUSION) - POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS**

### **BLOOD THINNERS**

- During your hospital stay may be given to you oral or injectable blood thinners but you may not need them after hospital discharge. Follow your doctor's prescription.

### **COLD THERAPY (ICE THERAPY)**

- **DO NOT** use cold therapy if your nerve block is still in effect. You should wait until your function and normal sensation have returned (**IF HAVING A NERVE BLOCK**).
- The ice pack must be large enough to cover the front area of the foot/ankle.
- You could apply ice for up to 15-20 minutes, remove it for an hour and repeat the application 6 to 8 times a day, always with one-hour intervals. Remember that you must put a thin towel between the ice/ice pack and your skin.
- If you are using a CRYO THERAPY UNIT please follow the manufacturer's directions.
- **DO NOT SLEEP WITH ICE.**

### **PHYSIOTHERAPY**

The goals of physiotherapy are:

- Gait instruction with the use of the walking aid.
- Helping you return to the hobbies and activities that you enjoy.
- Gait training to ensure safety and to normalize pattern as weight bearing is allowed.
- Strengthen leg and thigh muscles.

### **NERVE BLOCK**

- A nerve block can last anywhere from a few hours to over 36 hours, but usually this is between 12-24hours.
- Once the nerve block begins to wear off the weakness starts to improve and you may experience pain or a tingling sensation. At that time consider taking your pain medicine. Do not wait until the pain gets strong to take the medication.
- If you still feel numb at bedtime on the night of surgery, your nerve block could wear off in the middle of the night. It is recommended to take your pain medication before going to sleep, even if you have no pain or discomfort so that you won't wake up in severe pain.
- **Do not use cold therapy if your nerve block is still in effect. You should wait until your function and normal sensation have returned.**

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### **DRIVING**

- If it is your right limb that was operated on, you will be able to drive when you are fully weight-bearing and no longer wearing the walker boot. If it was your left leg, you can drive a car with an automatic transmission as soon as you are comfortable and out of the boot.
- If you drive a standard transmission vehicle, you will be able to drive when you are fully weight-bearing and no longer wearing the walker boot.

### **RISKS and COMPLICATIONS**

Despite having a high success rate, complications can occur. Some complications may require follow-up operations.

- Infection
- Wound-healing problems
- Non-union (failure of the bones to heal together)
- Mal-union (bones do not fuse in the intended position)
- Adjacent joint pain (arthritis)
- Numbness or tingling lasting weeks to months
- Nerve, blood vessel damage
- Blood clots
- Other: depending on your medical condition

It is common to have swelling and bruising around the wounds. The bruising changes colour over time from red to yellow or green.

Contact Footbridge **Wound Care Resource line: 778-945-6756, Ext 8** if:

- Pain on your CALF, BACK OF KNEE, THIGH or GROIN.
- Increased swelling on the operated thigh, knee or leg.
- Body temperature above 38 Celsius/101 Fahrenheit.
- Increased warmth, redness, and swelling around the wound.
- Increased fluid leaking from the wound.

### **CALL 911 if:**

- You have trouble breathing.
- You have chest pain.
- Anyone noticed that you lost consciousness.

