



## **FUSION OF THE GREAT TOE JOINT POST-OP INSTRUCTIONS**

*This is a typical post-operative course - patients heal at different rates and this protocol is subject to change depending on your progress at the physician's discretion.*

### **DAY 1:**

- You will be given crutches or a walker the day of surgery. You will also be given a post op shoe.
- You will use crutches, a walker or a knee scooter to remain nonweightbearing.
- Once you return home, elevate your foot with 2-3 pillows as much as possible for the next 24 hours.
- It is normal for your foot to feel numb for several hours that may last 24-36 hours. If you experience pain, begin using your pain medication as directed.
- You may notice a small amount of bleeding through your bandage. This is normal. If your bandages become soaked with blood, call your doctor.
- The dressing that was placed on your foot and ankle are sterile. You are not to change, remove or get the dressings wet. You can use a shower protector to keep your dressing dry while bathing.

### **DAYS 2-10**

- Your first follow up appointment with your doctor will be within 3-7 days of your surgery. Please ensure that you have a date and time for this appointment. At this visit, x-rays will be taken, a new sterile dressing will be re-applied, and you will be placed in a boot. You will remain
- nonweightbearing. You will take the boot off to shower and to sleep.
- Continue to elevate as much as possible. It is critical to elevate as much as possible while the skin is healing. If you have been cleared to return to work, you will still need to elevate throughout the day.
- Continue to use the ice and calf compression machine. This is typically used for 7-14 days following your surgery.
- If surgery was performed to your right foot, no driving for 4-6 weeks following surgery unless instructed otherwise by you physician. When you do drive, do not drive in the walking boot. Use a rigid sandal or the post op shoe.

### **DAYS 10-14**

- Your second post-operative visit is usually scheduled at 2 weeks following your surgery. Your sutures will be removed and steri-strips (special Band-Aids) will be applied. These will remain in place for at least 3-4 days. You may resume getting the foot wet in the bath or shower but do not soak the foot.
- You will remain non-weightbearing until post- op week 4-6
- You may be given a compression stocking to control swelling and/or a bunion splint to hold the toe in a proper position as it continues to heal.

### **WEEKS 4-6**

- You will now begin weightbearing in the CAM walking boot.

### **WEEKS 8+**

- Begin athletic activity at 10% and increase by 10-15% every other day. You may be in physical therapy to help you return to activity.
- By 8-10 weeks, light aerobic activity as tolerated (elliptical, light walking, light aerobic classes etc)
- By 3 months, most have returned to their regular lifestyle

**CALL YOUR DOCTOR IF:**

- You feel calf pain, shortness of breath, nausea or chills.
- You get your bandage wet.
- You have side effects such as a rash.
- You have bluish or cold toes.
- You have a temperature over 100 degrees F.
- You fall or injure your surgical foot.