

George Le, DPM

Podiatry Medicine & Surgery

Pain:

Please review your discharge instructions. If you have had a block, you may not be able to move or feel your foot or toes for 12-24 hours or more depending on how quickly your body metabolizes the block medicine.

Start taking your oral pain medication as soon as the block begins to wear off. **DO NOT GET BEHIND IN TREATING YOUR PAIN.** You will take more medicine trying to catch up than if you keep it under control.

For the first 2-3 days you may have an incisional burning pain. By 2 weeks post-op, the majority of patients are completely off pain meds. If you have had joint fusions or bone work, avoid anti-inflammatories (Tylenol is still okay) as they may slow bone healing. Otherwise, you may take any anti-inflammatories as needed unless you cannot take them for other reasons.

If you were written a prescription for Percocet or Norco, please take according to instructions on the bottle. If you were written a prescription for Zofran, be aware this medication works best preventatively; take it around the clock. If you wait to take it until you feel sick, you've taken it too late.

Lethargy, dizziness and nausea are signs that you may be taking too much of the pain medication; stop taking the narcotics as an overdose can cause you to stop breathing. If you are experiencing constipation, it is usually due to pain medications, inactivity, and dehydration. Make sure you are getting enough fluids and fiber in your diet. You may try drinking prune juice, and purchasing Colace from the pharmacy (taken three times a day with meals). Please only use laxatives such as MiraLax *after* you have tried and failed hydration, increasing fiber intake, prune juice, and Colace (laxatives can worsen dehydration).

Itching may be a side effect of pain medications; some patients find Benadryl to be helpful. If you are experiencing hives, rashes or swelling of the mouth and tongue, seek immediate medical attention from urgent care or the emergency room, as these may be signs of a life-threatening allergic reaction.

Elevate:

Elevate! Elevate! Elevate! Elevate as much as you can for the first *three months* following surgery. Swelling is tight, achy, and painful, and stretches the incisions. The foot must be higher than the heart to drain excess fluid from the foot. If you have significant pain and swelling, try loosening the ACE bandage, leaving the underlying dressing intact. The operating room is sterile, the dressing is sterile, and the best way to prevent post-operative infections is to prevent exposure to open air and germs.

Ice:

Elevation is *most important*, icing has been shown to be minimally effective in reducing swelling. Place the ice bag behind your knee should you choose to ice at home.

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Non-Weight Bearing:

You may use a cane, crutches, a walker, a rolling knee scooter (go to Google Images and type in 'Rolling knee scooter' to see different types), or a wheelchair. Crutches should not be pressing into the armpits if fit correctly. Medical supply stores often sell additional padding for crutches. The rolling knee scooter takes pressure off the wrists and shoulders, but is not covered by insurances. Renting or purchasing off Amazon, e-Bay, or Craigslist are options for the knee scooter.

Weight Bearing (as Tolerated on the Heel):

You will be placed in a special shoe that shifts your body weight to your heel. It is advisable to wear a shoe with a higher sole, or purchase an Evenup Shoe Balancer off Amazon or Walmart.com (go to Google Images and type in 'Evenup'). Back and hip pain after foot surgery are usually caused by unequal gait from wearing the boot/post-op shoe.

Showering:

Double bag with two tall kitchen trash bags. Place one over the leg and tape it, and then a second bag over the first bag and tape the top bag an inch or so above the bottom bag. You may also purchase a waterproof cast bag at a medical supply store, pharmacy, or online. **You may shower and get your foot wet 48 hours after stitches are removed.** Do not submerge in a bath, hot tub, swimming pool, etc. until the skin is completely healed. Do not rub soap into the wound. If you are non-weight bearing, consider getting a shower chair/stool and an elephant trunk attachment to your showerhead or faucet.

Dressings:

Do not touch until your doctor, Dr. Le, sees you in the office.

Call the office, or go to Urgent Care/Emergency room if you develop:

- Fevers
- Chills
- Redness around the wound/incision
- Have increased pain (usually burning) around the wound
- If you are diabetic and your blood sugar levels are increasing
- If you are having increased pain or swelling in the foot or calf that is not related to activity or not elevating

Go to the ER or call 9-1-1:

- If you are experiencing chest pain or shortness of breath
- Swelling of the face, mouth, or throat

Office number: 970-419-7243

After-hours On-Call provider line: 970-493-0112