Travis W. Hanson, MD
Orthopedic Foot & Ankle Surgery | Houston Methodist West

Postoperative Instructions

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Every patient's recovery is different. These are general guidelines. Dr. Hanson will provide you with specific instructions tailored to your procedure at your postoperative appointment. Call our office at 832-522-8280 with any questions or concerns.

IMMEDIATELY AFTER SURGERY

- Do not drive, operate machinery, or make important decisions for at least 24 hours after anesthesia.
- Have a responsible adult stay with you for the first 24 hours.
- Keep the operative extremity elevated above heart level as much as possible for the first 48-72 hours to minimize swelling.
- Apply ice wrapped in a towel to the area for 20 minutes at a time to help with swelling and discomfort.
- Do not remove your surgical dressing or splint unless instructed to do so.

WOUND CARE

- Keep your wound clean and dry until cleared by Dr. Hanson.
- Do not submerge the foot in water (no baths, pools, or hot tubs) until the incision is fully healed.
- Showering is typically permitted with a waterproof cover over the dressing — ask your care team for guidance.
- Do not apply any creams, ointments, or lotions to the incision unless specifically instructed.

PAIN MANAGEMENT

Some discomfort after surgery is expected. To manage pain:

- Take prescribed medications as directed. Do not wait until pain is severe before taking them.
- Elevate the foot above heart level — this is the single most effective way to reduce pain and swelling.
- Ice wrapped in a cloth can be applied around (not directly on) the dressing for 20 minutes several times a day.
- Avoid alcohol while taking prescription pain medications.
- As pain improves, transition to over-the-counter medications as directed by Dr. Hanson.

WEIGHT BEARING & ACTIVITY

Weight bearing status depends on your specific procedure. Follow Dr. Hanson's instructions exactly:

- Non-weight bearing: Use crutches, walker, or knee scooter. Do not put any weight on the operative foot.
- Heel weight bearing only: You may place only your heel on the ground.
- Weight bearing as tolerated: Gradually increase weight as comfort allows.
- Do not advance your activity level faster than instructed, even if you feel well.

CALL 832-522-8280 OR GO TO THE EMERGENCY ROOM IF YOU EXPERIENCE:

These may be signs of a serious complication requiring immediate attention:

- Fever over 101.5 degrees F
- Increasing redness, warmth, or drainage from the wound
- Severe pain not controlled by prescribed medications
- Significant swelling, especially calf pain or swelling (possible blood clot)
- Numbness, tingling, or color changes in the toes
- Any concern that something is not right — trust your instincts and call

YOUR FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENT

A postoperative appointment will typically be scheduled within 1-2 weeks of your surgery. Please confirm your follow-up appointment before leaving the surgical facility. If you have not been given a follow-up date, call our office at 832-522-8280 to schedule one.

This document is for informational purposes only and does not replace the specific instructions provided by Dr. Hanson. Always follow the individualized instructions given to you at your surgical visit and postoperative appointments.