



# *Post Operative Instructions: Medial Malleolus ORIF*

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## **ACTIVITY**

- **Do not bear weight on the operative leg until permitted by Dr. Gilmer.** Please use crutches to assist with walking.
  - Do not engage in prolonged periods of standing or walking the first 7-10 days following surgery.
  - Avoid long periods of sitting (without leg elevated) or long-distance traveling for 2 weeks.
  - You may move your hip and knee as much as you would like.
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## **SPLINT**

- Please keep the boot and dressings dry. Leave the boot on until your first post op appointment.
  - If you are going to shower, please protect the boot with a garbage bag, saran wrap, etc to keep it dry. We recommend a sponge bath initially, particularly because it is hard to stand on one leg in the shower, especially if you are on narcotic pain medications.
  - We will remove the boot at your first post-operative clinic appointment.
  - Do not stick items down your boot, even if it itches underneath! If you have itching, you can “knock” on the splint...the vibration from the knock can typically alleviate the itch.
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## **DRESSING & INCISIONS**

- A small amount of red-tinged drainage on the dressing during the first 2 days is normal.
  - Keep the dressing clean and dry; protect it while bathing or showering.
  - Do not apply Bacitracin or other ointments.
  - Avoid soaking in pools, lakes, hot tubs, or the ocean until sutures are removed and the incision is fully healed.
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## **PAIN & INFLAMMATION**

### Ice

- Apply ice wrapped in a dry towel 20 minutes at a time, several times per day for the first week, then as needed.

### Compression

- Use an ACE wrap or white stocking to reduce swelling.
- The white stocking should be worn for 5–7 days to help prevent blood clots and reduce knee swelling.

### Elevation

- Keep your foot elevated above heart level as much as possible for the first 3–4 days.
- Place a pillow under your calf or foot, not under the knee.

### Pain Medications

- Take your prescribed medications as directed.

#### Tylenol (Acetaminophen)

- First-line for pain.
  - Take 1000 mg every 6–8 hours.
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- Do not exceed 1000 mg per dose or 4000 mg per day (limit to 3000 mg/day if you have liver issues).
- Do not drink alcohol while taking Tylenol.

#### Oxycodone

- For moderate to severe breakthrough pain only.
- Use sparingly and wean off as soon as possible.

#### Common side effects include:

- Nausea: Take with food.
- Drowsiness: Do not drive or operate machinery.
- Itching: Benadryl may help.
- Constipation:
  - Use stool softeners (e.g., Senna-Docusate) or OTC options (Mineral Oil, Milk of Magnesia, etc).
  - Avoid bananas, rice, apples, toast, and yogurt (may worsen constipation).
  - Light walking helps stimulate bowel function.

#### Refills:

- If you think you will need a refill, you must request it during regular weekday office hours.
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#### **DVT PROPHYLAXIS**

- Take Aspirin 325 mg twice daily for 4 weeks after surgery.
    - This is not for pain—it's to reduce the risk of blood clots (DVT/pulmonary embolism).
  - If you already take aspirin or other blood thinners, make sure your surgeon knows, as your plan may need adjustment.
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#### **EMERGENCIES**

You must have someone stay with you during the first 48 hours after surgery.

Call the clinic or the on-call orthopedist if:

- Drainage soaks the dressing, increases, smells foul, or if incisions become red, warm, or very painful.
  - You develop a fever  $>101.5^{\circ}\text{F}$  or chills.
  - You experience leg or calf pain, swelling, or difficulty breathing.
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#### **FOLLOW-UP CARE**

- Schedule a follow-up appointment at ~2 weeks postoperatively for a wound check, suture removal, and review of your surgery (if not already scheduled).
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