



Post Operative Instructions: Syndesmosis Fixation Repair

ACTIVITY

- **Do not bear weight on the operative leg until permitted by Dr. Gilmer.** Please use crutches to assist with walking for the first 6 weeks.
 - 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/BOOT

- Please keep the splint/boot clean and dry.
 - If you are going to shower, please protect the splint/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 splint at your first post-operative clinic appointment.
 - Do not stick items down your splint, 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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