



**JAMES J. DeLORENZO, D.P.M**  
**Physician of Podiatric Medicine and Surgery**

21 Old Main Street, Suite 107  
Fishkill, New York 12524  
Tel 845.897.FEET Fax 845.897.3335  
www.delorenzopodiatry.com

**POST-OP SURGERY PATIENT INSTRUCTIONS**

To all our patients, we would like to thank you for allowing us to participate in aiding you in helping you alleviate your podiatric concerns(s). Please read these instructions carefully. Your cooperation during this period of recovery and rehabilitation is essential for an uneventful post-operative course.

First of all, relax. It's over. You have just undergone surgery to correct a condition that has caused you discomfort. We hope that we have eliminated your problem for good. We both now must address ourselves to a recovery and rehabilitation period. By following a few simple instructions, this time can be uneventful, short-lived and with minimal discomfort.

**WHAT TO EXPECT**

Because surgery involves remodeling of bone and soft tissue (possibly skin, tendons, ligaments etc.), you will experience some degree of pain and swelling of your foot and lower leg. Usually, the discomfort will be at its worst for only a few days after the surgery. This is normal and most of it will subside to a degree. The area will be sensitive and you may experience tingling, numbness or arthritic pain, especially with movement of the area involved. These feelings will gradually lessen and should be gone within a few weeks to months. The exact period of rehabilitation varies from patient to patient, the type of surgery that was performed, your natural healing ability and, of course, your adherence to the instructions that follow.

**IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE SURGERY**

Go home immediately after the procedure is performed and keep ambulation to a minimum. You will have been prescribed pain medication prior to the surgery, so there should be no reason to delay getting home. Any necessary shopping should be done prior to the day of surgery.

**ACTIVITY**

Pamper your foot for a few days. In many cases, patients may be able to walk immediately but, it is best to minimize your activities. Use the surgical shoe or a sandal, as prescribed. Remove the shoe when not walking and elevate your foot above the level of your heart. This will keep swelling down and subsequently, pain. The more time the foot is in a dependent position (standing or sitting) the more swelling that may occur and therefore pain. It is important that you do not put any pressure on the back of your knee or ankle by crossing your legs or feet. Do not hang them over the arm of a chair or couch. Of course, trips to the bathroom are necessary and allowed but, again please refrain from extended time on your feet.

No cooking or preparation of meals even if seated-prepare them ahead of time. Your legs are still in a dependent position when sitting. If this is done for any length of time, the foot will swell. SWELLING CAUSES PAIN, a larger scar, greater risk of infection, longer healing time and a longer time to return to your normal shoe wear. So let's keep the leg elevated and decrease the possibility of unnecessary pain.

**YOUR DRESSING/ BANDAGE**

KEEP CLEAN AND DRY

The bandage that was placed on your foot **MUST** remain clean, dry and kept intact! It will be changed at the first office visit after the surgery. If possible, keep a large white sock over the dressing to keep it clean. This will also offer some added padding and protection. You need to apply ice packs to the front of the ankle and/ or top of the foot. If the dressing covers the entire foot, apply it to the ankle.

#### THE DRESSING SHOULD NOT BE REMOVED FOR ANY REASON

The bandage may feel snug, this helps control swelling. If it becomes too tight due to excess swelling, call your doctor and discuss this with him. Most of the time, the dressing is wrapped in a certain fashion that aids in controlling movement of the surgical site and therefore may need to be removed in a particular way.

Keep the dressing dry at all times. If it **gets wet** or dirty, this is an **EMERGENCY**. Water carries bacteria and if the surgical site gets wet, there **IS** a possibility of **infection**.

You need to contact your doctor immediately!!

#### **BLOOD**

You may observe bloodstains on your dressing. A certain amount of seepage is normal and can be expected to occur. Most bleeding occurring within the first few hours of surgery is a normal response. Bleeding is also a normal sequence of healing and is usually controlled by elevating the foot above the level of heart. Excessive bleeding, on the other hand, is not. Do not become alarmed, just contact your doctor and inform him of your concern.

#### **PAIN**

You were most likely given pain medication prior to the procedure. You are to take it as advised by your doctor. Failure to do so may cause delay in relieving it once the pain cycle begins. It is rare that severe pain is experienced in the first 24-48 hours following surgery. When present, it usually is not serious and is usually caused by swelling or as a reaction to the anesthesia or tourniquet that was placed around your foot/ankle. The proper application of ice packs, as suggested earlier should lessen the pain and swelling, as well as elevation. If a severe throbbing, pulsating pain persists, please contact us immediately.

Do **NOT**, under any circumstances take any alcoholic beverage while taking the pain medication prescribed. Nor should you operate a motor vehicle while taking the pain medication. While in bed, you will most likely need to sleep on your back to decrease the pressure on the surgical site. Placement of pillows beneath the knee and calf and allowing the foot to hang over the pillow usually help also. It is also normal, although most patients do not, to run a low grade temperature (fever) after surgery. If your temperature does rise over 101\* F or you experience severe chills or nausea contact us immediately.

#### **KEYS TO RECOVERY**

- \*Minimize activities
- \*Keep leg elevated
- \*Keep bandage clean, dry and intact
- \*Apply ice packs (20 minutes on/ off)
- \*Take pain medication as directed

#### **REHABILITATION**

After surgery you should begin to think about gradually returning to your normal routine within limits. For the next two months or so, you should consider this a period of rehabilitation with certain restrictions, requirements and precautions observed to ensure a successful recovery. It is vital that any sore area be kept free of irritation. Tight, stylish shoes will most likely **NOT** be possible. It's not completely out of the question but, not likely. You increase your possibility to return to normal shoe wear sooner if you follow instructions as advised, rather than trying to hurry along the natural process of healing. Mother Nature works at her own pace, and will at times, delay your healing if you try to push it. Continued discomfort, swelling and bruising may occur during this healing and rehabilitation period. Again, this is normal and to be expected at times and to a certain degree. You need to be monitored during this time frame to insure that the

bone and soft tissues are healing well and on course. You need to keep your appointments for follow up evaluations. If, at any time, you observe any unusual condition or feel you're not progressing as you should, please contact the office for an appointment.