POST-OPERATIVE CARE AND WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER SURGERY OF THE FOOT AND ANKLE

**Pain:** Following surgery every patient experiences pain. Our goal is to make sure your pain is well controlled. You will be given prescriptions for one or more medications. Please refer to the yellow medication information sheet that was included in your packet. Common side effects include dizziness, sleepiness, night sweats and nausea. Often eating prior to taking pain medicine will prevent nausea. If a reaction occurs, stop taking the medication and call the office. If it is a serious reaction, report to your local emergency room.

If you have a nerve block your foot will be numb for several hours. Sensation will return (and pain with it) in a few hours. Begin your pain medication **BEFORE** your block wears off and take it routinely for the first day or two. **DO NOT wait until you have pain to start your pain medicine.**

**SWELLING:** Swelling occurs after any surgery and can be treated and prevented with ice and elevation. Your extremity should be elevated well **above the level or your heart** (unless instructed otherwise by the doctor or nurse). Elevate as much as possible for the first 7 days after surgery. Use ice packs intermittently to reduce pain and swelling. Be careful to **avoid putting ice on unprotected skin, this could cause frostbite.** If you are in a cast, it is important to wiggle your toes and bend your knee on the operative side to promote good circulation.

**DRESSING/CASTS:** Whether you are in a cast, splint, walking boot or post-op shoe it is important to keep the dressing /cast clean and dry. Do not remove your dressing unless instructed to do so by the doctor. Dressing and taping is used to maintain the surgical correction. If the gauze and tape dressing becomes too tight, you can split it with scissors, loosen it and then apply additional tape to secure it. If your cast or splint is too tight please call the office or page the doctor. Dressings and cast must be securely covered for showers. Commercial cast covers are available, or use double plastic bags and secure with a heavy tape. If your cast gets wet, use a hair dryer to blow it dry. Moisture under a cast or dressing can cause problems and should be attended to ASAP. Call the office to report the problem.

OVER
**BLEEDING:** It is very common for bleeding to occur after surgery. If your dressings become soaked with blood, **DO NOT** remove the dressing, but rather re-enforce or cover the dressing with the bandage kit that was sent home with you. If it continues to soak through please call the office or page the doctor if the office is closed.

**WEIGHT BEARING:** It is important to refrain from unnecessary walking during the first few days after surgery. Try to be up for bathroom use and meals only. You will be given weight-bearing instructions before you leave the hospital or surgery center. For safety use your walker or crutches and do not bear any weight until your anesthesia block has worn off completely. If you are given a post-op shoe to wear over your dressing you can bear weight on the **heel and outside of the foot.** **DO NOT put pressure on the toes.** Patients in casts, splints and walking boots **should not bear any weight until instructed to by the doctor, use your crutches or walker for ambulation.**

**OBSERVATION:** Watch for change of color in the nail beds of your toes. To check the blanching response: 1. Apply pressure to the nail bed, it should become pale, 2. Release the pressure and normal color should return quickly. If the toe turns dark or very white it is important to call the office or page the doctor.

Please call the office for the following concerns:

1. If you have any redness or drainage coming from the dressing.
2. Temperature (fever) of 101° or more.

If you are experiencing a problem or have a concern, please call the office at 208-367-3330. If the office is closed, remain on the line and you will be connected to the answering service. If it is a medical emergency, please go to your local emergency room for immediate attention.

**YOUR FOLLOW UP APPOINTMENT:**

**IF SEDATION WAS GIVEN, DO NOT DRIVE, OPERATE HEAVY OR COMPLICATED EQUIPMENT, OR MAKE ANY LEGAL DECISIONS FOR AT LEAST 24 HOURS.**