



## Ankle Fracture – ORIF Post-Operative Instructions

### Dressing

- A bandage with a plaster splint is applied after surgery.
- Splint stays on until stitches are removed (2–3 weeks).
- Keep the splint dry at all times.

### Showering

- Showers are allowed 24 hours after splint and sutures are removed.
- Sutures are usually removed at your first post-op appointment.
- Steri-strips will be placed over the incision; leave them on until they fall off naturally.
- Do not soak or submerge the ankle (no baths, pools, hot tubs).
- Keep incisions as dry as possible; gently dry the area after showering.

### Bleeding

- Mild oozing under the splint or slight bloody drainage through the bandage is normal.

### Swelling

- Swelling around the ankle and foot is common.
- Elevation is the most important way to reduce swelling.
- Temporary numbness in the foot may occur due to swelling.
- Ankle swelling may persist 9–12 months.

### Pain Relief

- For mild pain: Tylenol 1–2 tablets every 4–6 hours (max 8 tablets in 24 hours).
- For severe pain: use prescribed medication as directed.
- Avoid alcohol while taking prescription pain medication.

### Aspirin Use

- If you are over 35 or a female taking birth control, take 81 mg baby aspirin daily for 2 weeks after surgery to help prevent blood clots.



### Diet

- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Eat a bland, nutritious meal after returning home.

### Nausea & Vomiting

- Occasionally occurs after anesthesia.
- Clear liquids may help.
- If you are prone to nausea, discuss with your anesthesiologist.

### Drowsiness

- Drowsiness may last up to 48 hours after anesthesia.

### Activities

- Crutches are provided for comfort.
- No walking on the foot for 6 weeks.
- After 6 weeks, you may walk in a walking boot as instructed.

### Post-Operative Office Visit

- Appointment is usually scheduled for 10–14 days after surgery.
- If not already scheduled, call the office to arrange one.

### Signs of Infection

- Increased redness, unusual appearance, or foul smell at incision
- Green or yellow drainage
- Fever above 101.5°F  
(*A slight temperature is normal immediately after surgery.*)


### Signs of a DVT (Blood Clot)

- Calf swelling on the operative leg
- Calf pain with foot flexion or weight bearing  
→ Contact the office immediately.  
→ If after hours or weekend, go to the nearest ER for an ultrasound.



 Physical Therapy

- Typically begins after splint and sutures are removed.
- You will be informed when to start and given a prescription if needed.

 EMERGENCIES – Call Immediately

Office: (214) 265-3260

Dr. Heinrich: (214) 326-9141

Call for:

- Painful swelling or numbness
- Unrelenting pain
- Fever over 101° or chills
- Redness around incisions
- Continuous drainage or bleeding (small amount is normal)
- Difficulty breathing
- Excessive nausea/vomiting