POST-OPERATIVE CARE IN DAY-CASE FOREFOOT SURGERY.

The use of ankle blocks and modern (stable) surgical approaches has revolutionised the post-operative care in most forefoot surgery. This combination makes immediate weight bearing and day-case foot surgery safe and indeed ideal. It improves the patient’s independence, gives the patient control, reduces the chance of infection with antibiotic resistant microbes and reduces complications by encouraging early mobilisation.

The patient is usually able to walk out of the hospital. Early discharge from hospital is the aim as this is when the ankle block is fully effective allowing the patient to return home safely and pain free.

1) **The postoperative shoe is worn at ALL times**

You should have your post-operative shoe available before surgery so that it can be applied in theatre: you are then able to walk on the operated foot. The shoe protects the foot and is worn at all times, including in bed, at least until the first post-operative review. It is also preferable to have post-operative medications available prior to the surgery as this streamlines return home.

2) **Plan to go home 1 hour after the procedure.**

With day case surgery once you are stable following the surgery you should be discharged. This typically is within an hour to an hour and one-half; at this stage you will be essentially pain free. You should have someone available to accompany you and help with your transport home. Delay simply risks the local anaesthetic ankle block wearing off whilst you travel.

3) **Take Panadeine Forte soon after surgery and regularly after there**

   **Use Oxycodeine (Endone) for breakthrough pain**
   **Take Phenergan for nausea.**
   **Take Keflex (antibiotic) if prescribed.**

You should take two of the Panadeine Forte tablets immediately on arriving home even if you are not in pain. This is to ensure that you have adequate pain relief “on board” when the ankle block starts to wear off. It is much easier and better to control pain before it becomes significant than to try to relieve it once it has become severe.

You should keep taking the Panadeine Forte (1 – 2 tablets, 4 hourly) regularly. When pain starts to come on, you should check that the foot is adequately elevated, then check that you have taken your Panadeine Forte: if this has been done, and the pain is uncontrolled, Oxycodeine (Endone, 1 tablet 6 hourly) should be taken. Use Phenergan (10mg, one tablet 6 hourly) to combat nausea often caused by the Endone. Phenergan also has the added advantage of providing some additional analgesia (pain relieving medication) as well as giving a sedative effect.

4) **Elevate your foot**

Following surgery it is critical that you elevate your foot to limit the amount of post-operative swelling. You should elevate your foot with 3 pillows or a "bean bag" at the end of the bed, so that your big toe is level with your nose. During the initial 48 hours following surgery, walking is generally only permitted for trips to and from the bathroom.
5) **Always wear the postoperative shoe – walk on but do not dangle the foot.**
You may walk for short distances from the day of surgery. It is vital that you do not "dangle" the foot: it is to be either elevated or walked upon but not simply hung. As swelling settles so will the post-operative throbbing pain, which results from it. You may then increase the amount of activities as determined by the pain but you **must always wear the post-operative shoe.**
The surgeon will instruct you on how to walk in your postoperative shoe. For big toe surgery (such as bunion correction) you should only put weight on the heel and the outer border of the foot.

6) **Crutches**
Crutches may be prescribed for you depending on the type of surgery that you have undergone. Please follow your individual instructions highlighted below and refer to [www.footsurgeon.com.au](http://www.footsurgeon.com.au) for further information regarding weight bearing in the postoperative shoe.

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<th>Crutches required:</th>
<th>Yes / No</th>
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<th>Weight allowed on foot:</th>
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6) **Do not remove your dressings**
Not infrequently (nor surprisingly) the bandage will “bleed through”. You should elevate your foot and allow the bleeding to settle. If the bandage is unsightly then simply wrap another lightly over it. Do not remove the surgical dressing without instructions as this increases the risk of wound infection as well as losing the important splinting and compression effect exerted by the bandages.

7) **Do not wet you wounds or you foot.**
Wetting your foot or dressings allows for wound contamination and infection – it is to be avoided! When bathing 1) wrap the foot in a completely sealed plastic bag and **ALSO** 2) keep the foot out of the water. This can be done by either hanging the foot out of the bath or sit on a low stool in the shower and prop the foot up on a higher chair with the operated leg sticking out of the shower door and the foot out of the shower.
It is important to use both methods of keeping dry, as neither alone is entirely reliable.

8) **Do not smoke.**
Smoking increases the rate of significant post-operative complications in foot surgery ten times that of the non-smoker. **Do not smoke.**

9) **Post operative review in one to two weeks.**
Review following such surgery is typically two weeks following surgery. Usually this appointment is made prior to admission to the hospital. If this has not been done please ring the rooms to make this appointment.

*If you experience problems in the post-operative period you should contact Dr Cornoiu either through rooms (9428 9944) or paging service 0419090506*