

Craig S. Mauro, MD  
Discharge Instructions  
Ankle Surgery

A successful recovery after ankle surgery includes controlling swelling and discomfort, healing, regaining normal range of motion of the ankle joint, regaining strength in the muscles around the ankle joint, and gradually returning to preoperative activities. The following instructions are intended as a guide to help you achieve these individual goals and recover as quickly as possible after your ankle surgery.

**A. Comfort:**

1. **Elevation:** Elevate your knee and ankle above the level of your heart. The best position is lying down with two pillows lengthwise under your entire leg. Elevation should be done for the first several days after surgery.
2. **Ice:** Ice controls swelling and discomfort by slowing down the circulation in your ankle. Place crushed ice in plastic bag over your ankle 4-6 times every day for no more than 20 minutes at a time. Ice can be used while the initial post-op dressing and splint are on. Once the initial dressing has been removed, place a thin towel between your skin and the ice.
3. **Pain Medication:** Take medications as prescribed, but only as often as necessary. Avoid alcohol and driving if you are taking pain medication.
4. **Sleeping:** You may sleep in any position that is comfortable. Elevate your entire leg on pillows for comfort.

**B. Medication:**

You have been given prescriptions for pain medication and a stool softener to take after surgery. Depending on your medical history and the type of surgery performed, you may or may not be given a prescription for an anti-inflammatory medication or a medication to prevent a blood clot. Please let Dr. Mauro know if you have an allergy or sensitivity to any of these medications.

1. **Pain Relief:** Percocet (oxycodone/acetaminophen) 5/325mg, 1-2 tablets every 4-6 hours as needed for pain
2. **Stool Softener:** Colace (docusate sodium) 100mg, 1 capsule twice a day as needed for constipation while taking pain medication
3. **Anti-inflammatory:** Naprosyn (naproxen) 500mg, 1 tablet twice a day with food for 2 weeks then as needed for inflammation
4. **Blood Clot (DVT) Prevention:** Aspirin 325mg, 1 tablet once a day with food to prevent blood clots. You may require a different anti-coagulant (blood thinning medication) for a brief period following surgery while you are limited in your ability to bear weight. This medication may be Coumadin (warfarin) or Lovenox (enoxaparin) injection. If you have been given a prescription for one of these medications, DO NOT take Aspirin or any other anti-inflammatory medications.

**C. Eating:**

1. Your first few meals after surgery should include light, easily digestible foods and plenty of liquids.

2. Some people experience slight nausea as a temporary reaction to anesthesia.

**D. Activities:**

1. **Weight-bearing:** You are NOT allowed to put weight on your operative leg. Two crutches or a walker should be used until directed to discontinue by Dr. Mauro.
2. **Splint:** Keep the splint and dressing on, clean, and dry until you are seen at your first postoperative appointment. At this visit you will be placed in a cast or walking boot, depending on what surgery was performed.
3. **Exercises:** Your motion in your ankle is limited by your splint or cast but you may move your hips, knees, and toes and non-operative ankle to maintain mobility and avoid stiffness.
4. **Physical Therapy:** PT should begin when you no longer need a splint or walking boot (approximately 4-6 weeks after surgery). You will be given a prescription for physical therapy along with physical therapy instructions to take to the therapist.
5. **Return to Work/School:** Your ability to return to work depends on your level of discomfort and how much demand your job puts on your knee and leg. If you have any questions, please discuss them with Dr. Mauro.
6. **Athletic Activities:** Athletic activities such as throwing, lifting, swimming, bicycling, jogging, running, and stop-and-go sports should be avoided until cleared by Dr. Mauro.
7. **Driving:** Driving is NOT permitted until after your first postoperative visit and may not be permitted for 6-8 weeks following right ankle surgery.

**E. Wound Care:**

1. Keep the splint and dressing on, clean, and dry until you are seen at your first postoperative appointment. At this visit you will be placed in a cast or walking boot, depending on what surgery was performed.
2. You may shower 3 days after surgery, covering your splint with a large plastic bag secured with tape or cast protector to keep it dry. Cast protectors may be purchased independently by calling Dry Cast at 1-800-DRYCAST (1-800-379-2278). You should sit on a sturdy bench or chair while showering. You may tub bathe if you can support your leg on the edge of the tub so that the splint and dressing remain dry.
3. Swimming and soaking should be avoided until allowed by Dr. Mauro.

**F. Call Dr. Mauro If:**

1. Pain persists or worsens in the first few days after surgery.
2. You note excessive drainage or foul smelling odor coming from the splint.
3. You have a fever greater than 101°.
4. You have pain, swelling, or redness in your leg or calf or toes that is unrelieved with elevation.
5. You have numbness, weakness, or a burning sensation in your leg or foot.
6. You have any questions or concerns at any time.

**G. Return to the Office:**

Your first office appointment should be within the first 7-10 days after your surgery. Call Dr. Mauro's office to make your first postoperative appointment if it was not already made.

Your first postoperative appointment with Dr. Mauro is: \_\_\_\_\_