



# ANKLE FRACTURE

## Postoperative Instructions

Elevation is absolutely critical to your recovery. Ice is not as helpful because you have thick bandages/dressings. Keep your foot elevated 12-16" above your heart for the first 72 hours after surgery. Think "toes above your nose."

Swelling is controlled by elevation, not medication. The best way to keep your swelling and therefore pain under control is elevation. Ibuprofen and other anti-inflammatory drugs don't reduce swelling that has already occurred, they prevent new inflammation and subsequent swelling.

Don't trade sleep for elevation. If you can't sleep on your back with your foot elevated, stop elevating. Sleep is more important.

### WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER SURGERY

#### Weeks 1-2:

- Minimal activity out of the house. Strict non-weight bearing.
- Elevate your leg and ankle whenever resting.
- Gradually decrease the pain medication you're taking. You should have some discomfort, you just had surgery. Soreness is your body telling you to slow down, listen to it. **Your bone is healing during this time. Do not push through pain!**
- Exercise: You will get a good sense of how much you can be on your foot after the first 72 hours. You may go to your fitness center and do upper body/core exercises as long as your splint or cast is not touching the ground.

#### Weeks 2-6:

- Gradually increase activities. Continue strict non-weight bearing in cast or splint. Listen to your foot and ankle. If it is sore, rest. Your bone and supporting soft tissues are still healing. **Pain is still not your friend. If it hurts, don't do it!**
- After your sutures come out, and you are out of the cast, you may get your ankle wet in the shower. No bathing tubs or soaking.
- Exercise: Keep resistance **low** on exercise bike. Continue upper body/core exercises.

#### Continued Healing:

- Begin transition out of the CAM boot once x-rays demonstrate healing.
- Begin formal physical therapy. PT helps to retrain your gait and re-educate your muscles from walking improperly. You may begin doing regular activities gradually and wearing regular shoes. **It's not unusual to take 2-3 weeks to feel comfortable walking in regular shoes.** Keep using your CAM boot if you have pain while walking in shoes. Please be patient. It takes between 6-12 months to get to a final result. You will keep improving up until a year after surgery.
- Exercise: Increase resistance on bike, OK to use an elliptical trainer, progress weight bearing on treadmill **as pain and your Physical Therapist allows.**