

Leg Surgery

After Visit Summary

This is general information. See your After Visit Summary for how to take care of yourself after surgery.

Your health care team will work with you to understand any challenges you have after your hospital stay. This will help your team work toward a plan to make sure you have the right care and support to help manage your health after you leave the hospital.

Your Surgery

You had leg surgery to repair a broken leg.

What To Expect After Surgery

- You may have some drainage on the dressing, cast or both. This is normal.
- It is normal to feel itching under the cast.

Before the Surgery

- Tell your health care provider if you:
 - are pregnant
 - have a latex allergy
 - have diabetes
 - take a blood-thinner medicine.
- Remove any jewelry or piercings.
- Arrange to have someone drive you home. You will not be able to drive after surgery.

Pain Relief

- Prop your foot on 2 to 3 pillows at night. Keeping your foot above your heart level will decrease swelling.
- Wiggle your toes to help with blood circulation and to keep down swelling.
- Use a cold pack for pain relief.
 - Place a clean, dry towel on your leg.
 - Put the cold pack on the towel.
 - Leave the cold pack on for 20 minutes at a time.
 - Apply the ice pack any time you want.
- Take any prescription or over-the-counter medicine as directed.

Activity

- Avoid dangling your foot.
- You may take a shower or tub bath but do not soak your incision.
 - Cover the incision site with a plastic covering so the site does not get wet. (Remove the covering after the shower.)
 - If you have trouble standing, you may need to use a special shower chair or stool for your safety.
- If your health care provider recommends you use crutches, put weight on your foot only as directed by your doctor.
- Wear the brace, splint or immobilizer as directed.

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- Exercise your toes by wiggling them back and forth.
- Your health care provider will tell you when it's OK for you to shower, drive, return to work, exercise, lift, and have sex.
- Alternate rest and activity.
- Avoid tobacco and secondhand smoke. They can slow your recovery.

Incision Care

- Keep the dressing, cast or both dry. Do not remove either until your health care provider gives you directions.
- Do not use anything to scratch under the cast.
- Steri-Strips® (paper-like tape) may have been placed on your incision. They can get wet in the shower. You may peel them off after 7 days.
- Follow any directions your health care provider gives you.
- If your wound has staples, follow your health care provider's directions.

Cast Care

- See "Cast Care," ortho-ah-31127 for directions.

Food and Beverages

- Eat well-balanced meals. Follow any instructions your health care provider gave you.
- Drink more liquids.
- Avoid alcohol while you are taking prescription pain medicine.

When To Call Your Health Care Provider

Call your health care provider if:

- your surgery foot, toes or both become:
 - dusky-colored (blue purple) and is not relieved by raising your leg
 - hot or cold to the touch
 - numb, tingles or swells and is not relieved with rest or by raising your leg
- the dressing, cast or both is too tight
- the cast breaks or softens
- you have bright red bloody drainage that soaks the dressing, cast or both
- you have pain or burning under the cast
- you have a temperature of 101 F or higher
- you have new pain or pain you can't control
- you have signs of infection at your incision site:
 - pain
 - swelling
 - redness
 - odor
 - warmth
 - green or yellow discharge
- you are unable to get out of bed
- you have nausea (upset stomach) or vomiting (throwing up) that won't stop
- you have any questions or concerns.

Follow-up Appointment

Keep all follow-up appointments with your health care provider or specialist, even if you are feeling well.