

# Following Foot & Ankle Surgery

Information & advice for Surgical Day Unit patients

## Physiotherapy

This leaflet has been designed to give you some important information following your foot and ankle surgery, with particular attention to your rehabilitation.

### Benefits/Risks of Exercise

Following your operation, it is helpful to perform the exercises to help prevent stiffness in the foot and ankle.

You can start the exercises straight away, and they should be performed a few times a day.

#### Ankle Plantarflexion/ Dorsiflexion



You can do this in sitting or standing, depending on which is more comfortable for you. On your operated side, move your ankle so your toes are pointing towards the floor and then towards the ceiling, repeat this movement.



#### Ankle Inversion/ Eversion



You can do this sitting or standing, depending on which is more comfortable for you. On your operated side, turn the sole of your foot to point one way and then the other, repeat this movement.

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### Symptoms to Report

#### Signs of infection

Some redness and swelling is expected after surgery but if you develop one or more of the following symptoms then please contact your GP or the surgical day unit as soon as possible:

- Increase in swelling and redness around your wound that you do not think is part of the normal healing of your wound.
- It feels hot.
- Discharge of green or yellow fluid from the wound.
- You generally feel unwell or have a fever (temperature higher than 38°C).

### Other Information

#### Crutches

You may be given crutches following your surgery and you will be taught how to use them based on your weight bearing status. Your weight bearing status will either be full weight bearing, partial weight bearing or non-weight bearing. You should continue to use the crutches until advised by your physiotherapist.

#### Post-operative Shoe

Following your surgery you may also be given a shoe to wear. The shoes fit both the left or right foot and come in small, medium or large sizes. They are designed to prevent you from putting weight through your toes when you are walking. You do not need to wear the shoe when you are in bed or resting.

#### Pain Relief

After your surgery, your foot and ankle may be sore and you will likely be given painkillers. If the painkillers you have been given are not sufficient, please contact the surgical day unit or your GP.

#### Ice & Elevation

Following your surgery, it is recommended you use ice and elevate your foot:

Ice packs or a cold compression will help with swelling and may also help with pain. Wrap frozen peas or crushed ice in a damp, cold cloth and place on the foot for up to 15 minutes.

Elevation will help reduce any swelling. It is important your leg is straight and your heel above hip height for effective elevation. For the first 72 hours following your surgery, it is recommended you elevate your foot for 50 minutes every hour.

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### Working

You should have been given a sick note by the hospital if required after your surgery. The length of this sick note will depend on a number of factors including the work you perform. For any concerns, please liaise with the surgical day unit team using the contact details below or your own GP.

### Driving

Your surgeon will advise you when you can start driving again but it will be a minimum of six weeks after surgery or whenever you can comfortably put weight through your operated leg. Your physiotherapist will be able to provide guidance on when you may be able to start with short journeys but it is your responsibility to ensure you are in control of the vehicle at all times.

### Hobbies

It is important to discuss returning to your usual activities with your surgeon and physiotherapist as it will depend on the surgery you have had and the type of activity you would like to return to. Generally, it is 6 to 12 weeks before you can return to activities such as swimming and golf.

### Next Steps

An outpatient physiotherapy appointment will be booked at your preferred hospital. If you have not had a letter or telephone call confirming when this appointment will be within two weeks, please call us using the contact details below.

### Contact Details

If you have any questions or concerns, you can contact us on one of the following numbers:

**Physiotherapy (City & Sandwell Hospital)** – 0121 507 2664, option 3.

**Hospital Switchboard** – 0121 553 3801, ask for the operator.

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### Sources used for information in this leaflet

Versus Arthritis (2021) Foot and ankle surgery. Available at: <https://www.versusarthritis.org/media/1301/foot-and-ankle-surgery-information-booklet.pdf> (Accessed 18 August 2021).

Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (2017). Preparing for foot and ankle surgery. Available at: [https://www.northumbria.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/images/15.09.15\\_30.pdf](https://www.northumbria.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/images/15.09.15_30.pdf) (Accessed 18 August 2021).

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