



**Thomas F. Vail, D.P.M., F.A.C.F.S.**

Podiatrist –Foot Surgeon  
1725 Western Ave., Suite C  
Findlay, Ohio 45840  
419-423-1888

*Board Certified – American Board of Podiatric Surgery*

## **Post-Operative Instructions**

A surgical operation has just been performed on your foot and/or ankle to correct a condition that caused you discomfort. We must now address the recovery and rehabilitation period. You can speed the healing process by adhering to the following instructions.

Due to the anesthetic you have had today I recommend that you:

1. Have a responsible adult drive you home and remain with you overnight.
2. Rest the day of surgery.
3. Dizziness is not unusual, so take it easy and rest for the majority of the day.

For the next 24 hours, **DO NOT**:

1. Drive a vehicle.
2. Operate hazardous machinery, power tools, appliances, etc.
3. Make personal or business decisions, or sign legal documents.
4. Ingest alcohol, tranquilizers, or sleeping pills.

**DIET:** Begin with clear liquids and light foods such as water, soup, JELL-O, or soda pop and advance to a normal solid diet if no nausea is present and if your bladder and bowels are moving normally. Continue good eating habits along with daily supplemental Vitamin and Mineral tablets.

**WHAT TO EXPECT:** Since most surgery involves remodeling the bone and soft tissue, your feet/ankles will probably experience some degree of pain and swelling. There will be a long-acting local anesthetic around the surgical site that will create numbness for several hours after surgery. As this anesthetic wears off, you will begin to feel some level of discomfort that usually only lasts a few days after surgery. The area will be sensitive and you may experience tingling or shooting-type pains. All of these feelings and discomforts will gradually lessen and should be completely gone within a few months. The exact healing time will vary from patient to patient and depends on your natural healing ability, as well as your adherence to the instructions that follow, and the exact nature of the surgery performed.

•**BLEEDING:** A small amount of blood seepage on your dressings is normal, is no cause for concern, and is usually controlled by simply elevating your lower leg and foot. However, if there is active and persistent bleeding even after elevation please call the office at once.

•**ACTIVITY:** Be kind to your foot/ankle and treat yourself to a few days of relaxation and recovery. In most cases, you will be allowed to walk immediately following surgery, however it is very important that you keep this to a minimum. Limit walking to the bare essentials of every-day activities. Otherwise, you should be seated in a bed or reclining chair with your lower leg and foot elevated above your heart. A simple guide is to have your big toe at eyeball level, which will always be above the level of your heart. Placing two or three pillows under your lower leg will easily accomplish this goal. Be certain to keep a gentle bend in your knee, and NOT to cross your legs/feet so that the blood-flow to and from your lower leg and foot will not be restricted. If you have been dispensed one, use your incentive spirometry 10x's per hour while awake to increase your oxygen level and decrease your chance of pneumonia.



**Thomas F. Vail, D.P.M., F.A.C.F.S.**

Podiatrist –Foot Surgeon  
1725 Western Ave., Suite C  
Findlay, Ohio 45840  
419-423-1888

*Board Certified – American Board of Podiatric Surgery*

APPLY ICE BEHIND YOUR KNEE FOR 10-15 MINUTES OUT OF EVERY HOUR WHILE YOU ARE AWAKE. ICE ON THE FOOT OR ANKLE WILL DO NOTHING, SINCE YOUR DRESSING WILL BE THICK AND BULKY.

•**BANDAGES:** You must keep the dressings clean and dry. Sponge baths work best for daily cleansing, a taped plastic bag around your leg will leak and get your dressings wet so keep your leg out of direct water (You can purchase Dry Cast step-into water tight ring that will keep your foot dry for showers). If this happens, your chance of infection increases dramatically and I want you to try and dry the dressing with a towel and cool hairdryer, as well as contact my office for further instructions. Under no circumstances are you to remove any portion of your dressing. It is the doctor's responsibility to evaluate and remove the dressings from your foot and leg when I see you in your scheduled follow-up office visit, which is usually in one week time from the operation itself but will vary based on the actual surgery performed.

•**CAST:** You must keep the cast and shoe attached to the bottom of the cast clean and dry. Sponge baths work best for daily cleansing; again, do not tape a plastic bag around your leg or attempt to submerge it as it will leak and get your cast wet. If this happens, your chance of infection increases dramatically and I want you to stop and contact my office immediately for further instructions. Under no circumstances are you to remove any portion of your cast or stick anything inside the cast since you may cut yourself and develop an infection. It is the doctor's responsibility to evaluate and remove the cast when I see you in your scheduled follow-up office visit, which is usually in 2-4 weeks time from the operation itself. You should use the crutches or walker at all times. Avoid hanging the leg down for any period of time since this will cause swelling inside the cast and an increase in pain that can be difficult to control.

•**EXTERNAL FIXATION DEVICE:** You must keep the dressings and all exposed hardware clean and dry. Sponge baths work best for daily cleansing; do not tape a plastic bag around your leg in an attempt to keep it dry as it will leak and get your dressings and wires wet. If this happens, your chance of infection increases dramatically and you should contact my office immediately for further instructions. Under no circumstances are you to remove any portion of your dressings, tamper or attempt to adjust your exposed hardware in any way. It is the doctor's responsibility to evaluate and remove the dressings from your foot and leg when he/she sees you in your scheduled follow-up office visit, which is usually in 1 week's time from the operation itself.

•**MEDICATION:** It is important to take the medication prescribed for you as directed. This will usually include a mild narcotic (pain pill), anti-inflammatory, muscle relaxant, antibiotic, and blood thinner. The specific medications will be tailored to your surgical procedure, activities, medical health, etc.

•**FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENT:** Make sure that you keep all appointments at the office since it is very important that your recovery be monitored closely. During the rehabilitative stage, all discomforts should gradually disappear and you will be ready to experience the results of our combined efforts. In the meantime, if you feel uncertain about the progress of your healing or observe an unusual condition, please call the office at the number(s) above for further instruction(s).

***Severe pain following surgery is rare, however, if severe pain occurs and is uncontrolled by the medication prescribed for you, please call our office. While recovering, it is advised that you do not use any hot water bottles or heating pads and that you avoid alcohol when***



***Thomas F. Vail, D.P.M., F.A.C.F.S.***

Podiatrist –Foot Surgeon  
1725 Western Ave., Suite C  
Findlay, Ohio 45840  
419-423-1888

*Board Certified – American Board of Podiatric Surgery*

***taking prescription medications, unless instructed otherwise. Your first post-operative appointment in the doctor's office will be scheduled by the assistants prior to your surgery.***

© This form is the property of Dr. Thomas F. Vail, DPM. No portion of this form may be copied or used for commercial, web, print or other unauthorized use. Unauthorized copying of this form for use is strictly forbidden and enforced.