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Ankle Arthroscopy Patient information Sheet

Dr Coffey has determined that you will require an arthroscopy of your ankle. This operation involves an admission to hospital and the administration of an anaesthetic. Once anaesthetised, a tourniquet is applied to the affected leg and two small incisions are made over the ankle joint. An arthroscope, connected to a video camera, is introduced into the ankle joint where the abnormalities can be visualised and treated.

Why is arthroscopy necessary? The following conditions are often treated with arthroscopy: chronic joint inflammation, post traumatic synovitis, soft tissue impingement, loose cartilage or bone fragments and torn ligaments.

How many incisions will I have? Most often there are two small 3mm incisions on either side of the ankle.

How long will I be in hospital? This is a day only procedure. Dr Coffey will see you prior to discharge.

When can I walk? Most patients are able to walk with the aid of crutches on the day of surgery. Crutches may be discarded when comfortably weight bearing. Driving should be avoided for at least 24 hours or until walking comfortably.

What do I do with the dressings? After surgery you will have a bulky dressing on the ankle. This is to absorb any bleeding as well as keep the wounds free of contamination. It should be left on for 24-48 hrs. You may then remove the dressing and replace it with small bandaid style dressings. An elastic bandage may make the ankle feel better and reduce swelling, as long as it is not too tight.

When may I shower? You may shower after the first dressing is removed. Do not soak or scrub the wounds. Replace dressings with bandaid style dressings.

What exercises should I do? You should start gentle exercises as soon as possible after surgery to minimise muscle wasting and improve joint mobility. Do the following exercises three times a day.

1. Flexion extension exercises: move your foot up and down at the ankle joint. Repeat 10 times.
2. Ankle circles: Rotate your foot in a circular fashion. Repeat 10 times.
3. Calf stretching: gentle calf stretching with the knee bent and then straight. Hold a stretch for 10 seconds. Do not bounce or stretch past the point of pain.
4. Formal physiotherapy may be prescribed if there are particular problems noted at your post op visit.

What pain relief will I need? Simple painkillers such as Panadol or Panadeine Forte may be given. Anti-inflammatories may also act to give relief if needed. Ice packs are good to reduce swelling and pain. If severe pain occurs please contact Dr Coffey's office during business hours or your GP or the hospital where you had the procedure performed.

Are there any potential complications? As with all surgery there are potential complications. Fortunately they are rare. Some of these complications include infection, deep vein thrombosis, nerve injury, persistent pain. If you are concerned about these before or after your surgery please discuss with Dr Coffey.