

# Non-Weight Bearing following ankle or foot surgery

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Following your operation, you must not put any weight through your operated leg.

**This is known as Non-Weight Bearing.**

**Please follow this advice to maximise your recovery:**

1. After the operation, it is strongly advised that you elevate your foot whenever you are at rest. This means elevating your foot on pillows so that it is higher than your hip. This will help with post-operative swelling, reducing pain and wound leakage and therefore reduce the risk of post-operative complications such as infection.
2. Take pain killers on a regular basis. These can sometimes cause constipation, if you notice any changes in this area, please consider laxatives or see your local pharmacist for advice.
3. You will be in a cast called a back-slab. This is a type of cast that allows for post-operative swelling. Do not get this wet.
4. As you are non-weight bearing, you will be unable to shower or bath. Hopping on wet surfaces puts you at increased risk of a slip/trip/ fall or causing damage to your operated foot. You cannot use a bath as you must not soak your wound or the cast. We advise that you strip wash until you are told you can fully weight bear through your operated foot.
5. Two weeks following your surgery you will have an appointment in the Orthopaedic Outpatient Clinic where you will have a:
  - a. Review of your wound and removal of stitches if necessary
  - b. A new plaster will be applied
  - c. Review with your consultant
  - d. Unless instructed otherwise, continue to be non-weight bearing.
6. At approximately four weeks following this appointment you will attend the clinic again to be reviewed by your consultant and the following will occur may:
  - a. Removal of plaster cast
  - b. Change in weight bearing ability – this will be guided by your consultant
7. Please do not drive if in a cast or boot, until given the all clear by your consultant/surgeon to do so.

## Plaster Cast Care

1. Keep it clean and dry. Do not cover it with plastic or put anything inside it
2. If the foot or ankle becomes extra painful or your toes feel cold and numb, contact the Plaster Room or attend the Accident and Emergency Department.
3. If the case cracks or breaks or have any concerns, please contact the Plaster Room

## For 24 hours following your general anesthetic:

1. Do not drive a car, ride a bicycle or operate machinery
2. Do not lock the bathroom or toilet door
3. Do not make important decisions or sign documents

4. Do not drink alcohol
5. If there are any problems after your return home, please contact the Orthopedic Elective Hub and not your GP
6. It is important following surgery to remain as mobile as possible as per your physiotherapist's instructions.

## Telephone Numbers

Hospital Switchboard	01493 452452
Concept Ward	01493 452331
Orthopaedic Outpatient Centre, Fracture Clinic Appointments	01493 452603
Plaster Services	01493 452317
(Monday – Thursday 8.30am to 5.15pm, Friday 8.30am to 1pm)	

### Your Feedback

We want your visit to be as comfortable as possible - talk to the person in charge if you have any concerns. If the ward/department staff are unable to resolve it, then ask for our Patient Advice and Liaison (PALS) information. Please be assured that raising a concern will not impact on your care.

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### OUR VALUES

#### **Collaboration**

We work positively with others to achieve shared aims

#### **Accountability**

We act with professionalism and integrity, delivering what we commit to, embedding learning when things do not go to plan

#### **Respect**

We are anti-discriminatory, treating people fairly and creating a sense of belonging and pride

#### **Empowerment**

We speak out when things don't feel right, we are innovative and make changes to support continuous improvement

#### **Support**

We are compassionate, listen attentively and are kind to ourselves and each other



**IN TRAN**  
communication for all

The hospital can arrange for an interpreter or person to sign to assist you in communicating effectively with staff during your stay. Please let us know.

**For a large print version of this leaflet, contact PALS 01493 453240**