

## Patient information

# Foot and ankle surgery - preparing for surgery

Foot surgery is not generally considered major surgery, but because it is not always as easy to rest the foot as other parts of the body, postoperative problems or complications can occur. This could lead to delays to your recovery and could affect the success of your surgery. It is not possible to eliminate all risk of complications but by using the following advice most can be avoided.

Before admission to hospital it is important that you keep your body and foot in the best possible condition prior surgery.

### General foot hygiene

In preparation for your foot surgery, try to keep your skin in good condition. Wash your feet daily especially between the toes. Avoid any blisters, abrasions or ulcers on your feet as this will possibly delay your surgery.

Take care when cutting toe nails. If the skin on your feet is particularly dry you can apply moisturising cream to help avoid cracking leading up to your surgery. Remove any nail varnish prior to admission to hospital.

### Athlete's foot

If you suffer with athlete's foot, you should try and have this cleared up before any surgery. It is acceptable to use antifungal treatment regularly but do not let your foot get too moist from excess use. Treat your socks and footwear with antifungal powder, to prevent re-infection. Ask your GP or pharmacist for advice if you need help treating the infection.

### Chiropody/podiatry

If you are having chiropody or podiatry treatment, it is important that you tell your podiatrist that you will be having surgery. Your last treatment should be one week

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Page 1 of 3

before the date of surgery at the latest. Do not resume any treatment after surgery without consulting your surgeon.

## **Recent infection / dental treatment**

If you have undergone any recent dental work or have had any symptoms of infection or had antibiotics within six weeks of your operation please contact the hospital prior to your admission.

## **Rest and recuperation**

After surgery your mobility will be considerably reduced. For the first two weeks you are advised to rest as much as possible with your foot in an elevated position. This promotes healing by reducing swelling and pain whilst protecting the surgical correction. Resting with your foot on a pillow/cushion in a reclined sitting position is sufficient. Elevation of the foot overnight in bed is also advised and can be achieved again with a pillow. Some patients suggest a pillow beneath the foot of the mattress to raise the mattress is often a comfortable position whilst in bed.

## **Reduced mobility**

You may have a plaster cast and/or a surgical shoe following your surgery. It is important that you wear this shoe when mobilising. You may also be provided with crutches or other walking aids to help you mobilise safely following surgery.

## **Driving**

Driving following surgery is usually specific to the surgical procedure you have had. We usually advise not driving for six weeks. Please discuss your needs with your surgical team before you attempt to drive a motor vehicle.

## **Weight loss**

If you are overweight, using the time that you are waiting for your surgery to lose some weight can ease the pressure on painful feet and help with your recovery.

## **Stop smoking**

Smoking has a significant effect upon surgery. It can delay healing of bone and skin and increases the risk of general anaesthetic. We strongly recommend that you stop before surgery.

We can refer you today or contact you GP or call.

**Suffolk Stop Smoking Service 0800 0856037 or  
NHS smoking helpline 0800 1690169 or  
Quitline 0800 002200**

## **Web sites**

[www.givingupsmoking.co.uk](http://www.givingupsmoking.co.uk)

[www.ash.org.uk](http://www.ash.org.uk)[www.quit.org.uk](http://www.quit.org.uk)

[www.quitsmokinguk.com](http://www.quitsmokinguk.com)

[www.bbc.co.uk/health/kth/index.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/health/kth/index.shtml)

[www.nosmokingday.org.uk/](http://www.nosmokingday.org.uk/)

## **Who can I call for help or advice?**

|  |              |
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| Orthopaedic Practitioner Advice Helpline | 01284713924  |
| Plaster technicians                      | 01284 713309 |
| Pre-Admission Clinic                     | 01284 712810 |
| Physiotherapy Department                 | 01284 713300 |
| Occupational Therapy Department          | 01284 713560 |
| Community Equipment Stores (OT)          | 01284 748826 |

*If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (the new name for DisabledGo)*  
<https://www.accessable.co.uk/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust>



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