

What to Expect After Having Joint Arthrodesis to Your Ankle

For patients of Dr. Lau

Why do I need this surgery?

You have arthritis in your ankle. Joint arthrodesis is a surgery to fuse or glue the bones in your ankle together so the joint doesn't move. We do this surgery stop the ankle joint from moving and causing pain.

What to expect after the surgery

On the day of your surgery:

Your foot is wrapped in a bandage and you wear a splint (soft cast). Do not change the bandage. Expect your foot to be numb for 12 to 24 hours after the surgery.

To manage pain:

- Prop up your foot when you are sitting or lying down by putting pillows under your foot. This lessens swelling.
- Take pain medications as you need.

Important: Do not put any weight on your foot. Use crutches, a walker or knee scooter to move around.

When to call surgeon:

Call Dr. Lau's office at 416 603 6292 right away if:

- your wound is still bleeding the day after surgery
- your foot feels numb or tingling the day after surgery
- your toes change colour (purple, white, or spotted) at any time

2 weeks after surgery:

You have a follow-up appointment in Fracture Clinic at Toronto Western.

- We take new x-rays to check on your recovery.
- We remove the bandage and sutures (stitches).
- We put a cast on your ankle.

Do not put any weight on your foot Continue to use crutches, a walker or knee scooter.

6 weeks after surgery:

You have a follow-up appointment in Fracture Clinic at Toronto Western.

- We take new x-rays to check on your recovery.
- We remove your cast and give you a fracture boot (special boot that keeps your ankle safe and comfortable).

Do not put any weight on your foot Continue to use crutches, a walker or knee scooter.

3 months after surgery:

You have a follow-up appointment in Fracture Clinic at Toronto Western.

- We take new x-rays to check on your recovery.
- You start physiotherapy to improve the strength in your foot.

Start walking on the foot while wearing the fracture boot. Slowly put more weight on your foot until you can walk normally. You wear the fracture boot for another 2 to 4 weeks.

4 months after surgery:

If you find it difficult to walk normally you can try wearing a rocker bottom shoe (shoe with thick sole and rounded heel).

What side effects can I expect?

Your ankle may be swollen for 6 to 12 months after surgery. It may feel throbbing, achy and uncomfortable at the end of the day. This is normal and gets better over time.

For more information:

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