

What to Expect After Having Rheumatoid Forefoot Reconstruction

For patients of Dr. Lau

What is rheumatoid forefront reconstruction?

Rheumatoid forefront reconstruction is a surgery to fuse or glue the joints in your big toe together and put pins in the other toes.

Why do I need this surgery?

Rheumatoid arthritis has made your toes crooked. We do this surgery to straighten the toes back to a normal position. The big toe will be straight but stiffer, and the lesser toes will be straight but continue to move at the knuckle.

What to expect after the surgery

On the day of your surgery:

Your foot is wrapped in a bandage and you wear a surgical shoe (special shoe that protects the foot). Do not change the bandage or take off the surgical shoe, even at night.

Expect your foot to be numb for 12 to 24 hours after the surgery. Every 4 to 6 hours, check that your toes are warm to touch and a normal colour. Keep the ends of the pins dry to prevent infection and help the wound heal.

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.

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

On the day after your surgery:

Your doctor will instruct you on whether you can start walking on your heel or whether you need to stay off your foot.

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).

Continue wearing the surgical shoe and walking on your heel. Continue to keep the ends of the pins dry.

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 the pins from your toes.

You can start wearing a comfortable shoe (sneaker).

What side effects can I expect?

You will have mild to moderate pain for 2 to 4 weeks.

Your toes may be swollen for 6 to 12 months after surgery. They 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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