ROBERT DEKKER, M.D.
ORTHOPEDIC SURGEON

Ascension

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Post Surgery Instructions
First Metatarsophalangeal (Big Toe) Joint Fusion

General Treatment Facts

- The goal of this surgery is to improve pain, swelling, and walking difficulty due to hallux rigidus.
- This operation is designed to lock the big toe joint and prevent painful movement due to arthritis or other injuries.
- Once fused, the big toe will not move at the joint, therefore high heeled shoes may be limited. Typically, patients can still tolerate a 1-1.5 inch heel shoe, but a higher heel is not well tolerated.
- You may ambulate on the outside and heel of the foot on the day of surgery while wearing a post-operative shoe. You may require crutches for balance support.

Post Surgery Course

Day 1

- The foot will be wrapped with lots of padding and placed in a surgical shoe designed to encourage weight bearing on the heel. You may be placed in a splint instead.
- If for any reason the padding is too tight, loosen the wrap and then secure it to your comfort level.
- It is important to ice and elevate the foot, take pain medication, and rest as needed.
- Do not get the foot or dressing wet.
- Move the ankle, knee, hip, and upper extremities.

Day 4

- Pain should be better after the 3rd day. If your pain worsens after day 3 or you have a fever and/or chills, please call the office.

2 weeks (approximately)

- First postoperative visit.
- Your dressing will be changed and your sutures will be removed. If you were placed in a splint, it will be removed at this visit.
- Continue to ambulate in the heel wedge shoe on the heel and outside of the foot only.
- Wean off crutches as tolerated.
- If the incision is healing well, you may begin to get the foot wet in the shower 2-3 days after your postoperative visit.

3 weeks

- If the incision in healed, you may submerge the toe under water
- Gentle exercise on a stationary bike is permitted.

- Do not roll through the front of the foot and continue to wear the wedge surgical shoe.

6 weeks

- You may be transitioned to a flat surgical shoe. Walking flat on the foot in the surgical shoe is permitted.
- If cleared by Dr. Dekker, you may drive with the surgical shoe.
- Avoid walking on uneven or rocky terrain.

10 weeks

- Wean from the flat surgical shoe into a supportive tennis shoe.
- Avoid walking on uneven or rocky terrain.
- Increase activity as tolerated.