Connecticut Orthopaedics

Megan R. Wolf, MD
Sports Medicine/Foot & Ankle

1st MTP Fusion
Post-Operative Protocol

General Treatment Facts

- The goal of this surgery is to improve pain, swelling, and walking difficulty due to arthritis or severe hallux valgus in the big toe.
- This operation is designed to lock the big toe joint and prevent painful movement due to arthritis, deformity, or other injuries
- Once fused, the toe will not be able to 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 will be able to ambulate on the heel of the foot on the day of surgery while wearing a postoperative shoe and using crutches or a walker.
- The postoperative shoe must be worn for 6-12 weeks depending on healing time.
- Most patients tolerated nearly any activity after fusion of the big toe, especially since their arthritis or deformity pain in the joint is relieved. However, activities that require a lot of motion in the big toe, such as kneeling down when gardening, yoga, or bowling are somewhat limited since the big toe joint cannot move.

Post Surgery Course

Day 1

- The foot will be wrapped with lots of padding and placed in a wedge surgical shoe. 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.
- Expect numbness in the foot for 4-12 hours and then anticipate the onset of pain.
- If allowed, you may ambulate on the heel only
- 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.
- Wiggle toes and move foot around in shoe as tolerated.

Day 6-10 (approximately)

- First postoperative visit in the office.
- Your dressing will be changed but your sutures will not be removed. If you were placed in a splint, it will be removed at this visit.
- You will continue to ambulate in the wedge surgical shoe on the heel only.
- Wean off crutches/walker as tolerated
- If the incision is healing well, you may begin to get the foot wet in the shower after this visit.

3 weeks

- If the incision is healing well, sutures will be removed in the office at this time.
- Gentle exercise on a stationary bike is permitted.
- Do not roll through the front of the foot or walk barefoot. Continue to wear the wedge surgical shoe.

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6 weeks

- If the incision is healed, you may submerge the toe under water.
- You may be transitioned to a flat surgical shoe. Walking flat on the foot in the surgical shoe is permitted.
- If cleared by Dr. Wolf, you may drive with the surgical shoe.
- Avoid walking on uneven or rocky terrain.
- **You may not walk barefoot, even in the house, until the joint has fused.**

10-12 weeks

- Wean from the flat surgical shoe into a comfortable rigid sole sneaker.
- Avoid walking on uneven or rocky terrain.
- Increase activity as tolerated.

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