

SURGERY INSTRUCTIONS

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Ankle Arthroscopy

What to Expect

- The following instructions will help guide you through your recovery. Separate instructions for therapy and exercises will be given and are available at www.VanThielMD.com.
- Dr. Van Thiel's PA (Physician Assistant) Carly Jackson will be closely involved in your care and recovery. A physician assistant is a licensed practitioner that has completed over 2 years of post-college medical training and has the credentials and expertise to treat patients independently.
- **1st Post-Operative Visit** – This will be between 10-14 days after the surgery. You will see Dr. Van Thiel and he will go through your pictures from surgery and answer any questions you have.
- **2nd and 3rd Post-Operative Visits** – Occur at 6 weeks and 3 months after surgery. During these visits you will be seen by Carly Jackson (Dr. Van Thiel's PA) to ensure that you are comfortable and meeting the recovery goals. Ms. Jackson is always in direct communication with Dr. Van Thiel and does have the medical expertise, training and credentials to help you along with your recovery.
- **4th Post-Operative Visit** – Occurs at 6 months after surgery. Dr. Van Thiel will discuss any questions that you have and ensure you are making a complete recovery.
- **Physical Therapy** – Physical therapy can start after the first post-operative visit.
- We will contact your insurance company to authorize your surgery, but we suggest that you also contact your insurance company for further information and to verify coverage.

Day of Surgery

- **Diet** – Do not eat anything after midnight the day of surgery.
- When you get to the hospital or surgery center Dr. Van Thiel will come speak with you and confirm the procedure and the side. Feel free to ask any questions.
- The anesthesiologist will also come speak with you. We routinely perform regional blocks for pain control during and after surgery. A regional block is a small injection that will numb the nerves at the operative site for 12-30 hours after surgery. These are excellent for pain control and helps avoid some of the side effects of strong pain medication.
- **After Surgery** – You will wake up in the recovery room and once you are comfortable and fully awake, the nurses will discharge you to go home.

Post-Operative Care

Diet

- Following surgery, nausea is very common. Begin with clear liquids and progress to your daily diet as tolerated.

Wound Management

- A bandage/splint is applied to the operative site. Keep this clean, dry, and intact until post-operative visit.
- It is normal for there to be drainage and for the dressing/ACE wrap to become blood tinged. If this occurs, reinforce with additional dressing.
- If showering, cover operative leg with plastic

bag/tape to keep splint dry

Activity

- Crutches should be used to walk and you should remain non-weightbearing on the affected leg.
- Elevate the operative leg with pillows under the foot and ankle to aid in the reduction of swelling.
- No driving until instructed by your physician.
- Generally, if you have a desk job you may return to work/school on the third post operative day.
- Return to a physically demanding job will be discussed on your postoperative visit.

Exercise

- You may begin exercises 24 hours after the surgery to include ankle pumps and quad sets.
- Formal physical therapy will begin after your return visit and it is safe to perform these exercises at home to assist with a return of strength and motion.

Ice/Cryotherapy

- An ice machine or ice packs will be provided and applied at the conclusion of your surgery.
- Use continuously for the first 72 hours postoperatively, then in 30 minute increments 4-5 times per day thereafter as tolerated.

Medications

- Most patients require the use of narcotics for a period of time after surgery. Take as directed.
- If you received a nerve block, numbness and loss of function may persist for up to 24 hours postoperatively. You are encouraged to take your prescribed pain medication as indicated on the bottle regardless of pain for the first 24 hours.
- Common side effects of pain medication: nausea, insomnia, itching, constipation, drowsiness, hallucinations.

- Take medications with food to reduce side effects
- Do not operate machinery or moving vehicles while taking the pain medication.
- Ibuprofen, Motrin, Advil or Aleve may be taken as directed in addition to the pain medication to control symptoms

Emergencies

- If at any time you have questions or emergent concerns contact Dr. Van Thiel or his physician assistant Carly Jackson, PA-C at (815-398-9491).
- If you are calling after hours or over a weekend you will be directed to the physician answering service and you may be called by the physician or physician assistant on call.
- Please call if any of the following arise:
 - Fever >101. (It is normal to have a low grade fever for the first 1-2 days after surgery)
 - Redness
 - Painful swelling
 - Numbness
 - Shortness of breath
 - Excessive bleeding and/or drainage from incision sites
 - If you require immediate attention, go to the nearest emergency room

Follow-up

- A follow-up appointment will be set for 10 -14 days after the surgery. If you have questions or concerns about this date contact our scheduler at (815-381-7365) during normal office hours.
- Physical Therapy will begin after your first postoperative visit
- If you have additional questions or concerns most questions can be addressed by our Nursing staff (Jamie) by calling (815-381-7365)