

Post-operative Instruction Sheet

Gastrocnemius Lengthening Procedure

Sean Peden, MD
203.869.1145

It is important for you follow the instructions below after gastrocnemius lengthening/recession.

WEIGHTBEARING

YOU MAY bear weight as tolerated after your procedure. Please use the protective boot at all times for 2 weeks after the procedure. Crutches may be helpful but are not required.

BANDAGE/DRESSING/BATHING

You may remove your **OUTER** postoperative bandage 2 days after the procedure. There will be an inner bandage with a watertight seal. Do not remove the **INNER** bandage. You may shower after removing the outer bandage. No baths or soaking. You may bear weight without the boot only for showers and transfers.

SWELLING

To minimize swelling after this procedure, keep the leg/calf elevated as much as possible for the first 48 hours. You may get up and move around, but whenever resting, strive to keep your toes at or above your nose level. Using couch cushions or a bean bag, or creating a ramp made out of pillows is helpful.

FEVER

A low grade fever below 101.5° is common within the first one (1) to four (4) days immediately following surgery. Call us if you experience a high fever or prolonged fever. You do not need to check your temperature on a regular basis.

MEDICATIONS

This procedure is typically not very painful. It feels similar to a muscle pull. Some pain is expected and in rare cases it can be a stronger pain. We recommend you take acetaminophen (Tylenol) and ibuprofen (Advil/Motrin). These medications can be taken at the same time or staggered. It is good to take the ibuprofen with some food. You will be given a prescription for a stronger pain medicine to use only if you experience significant pain. It is safer and better for your health to manage your discomfort with the over the counter medicines, if possible. Your pain management plan (dosages) was discussed at the preoperative appointment. Contact us if you are unclear about type of medication, timing or dosages.

Additionally, many patients are instructed to take one aspirin a day. This is not for pain but rather the blood thinning properties. This will not affect or interfere with your pain regimen.

NOTE: Surgery, immobility, and pain medications slow down gastrointestinal function and constipation is common. A stool softener or gentle laxative such as Miralax is suggested to alleviate this discomfort and can be obtained at the pharmacy without a prescription. Mix Miralax (polyethylene glycol) with coffee, water, or juice on a daily basis as a way to avoid constipation. In more severe cases, a 10 oz. bottle of magnesium citrate is effective.

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FOLLOW-UP

Schedule an appointment for 10-14 days after surgery. Your incision will be checked and your bandage changed at this time. Call to schedule an appointment if you have not already done so.

NUTRITION

Eat a well-balanced diet and take plenty of fluids. Water and electrolyte-containing drinks such as Gatorade or Vitamin Water are best for hydration. You should take a standard multivitamin as well as Vitamin C 500mg for two months after surgery to aid in healing. A high protein diet has been associated with better healing in some research, so be sure to eat enough protein and, if necessary, incorporate a protein drink to supplement your diet.

QUESTIONS

For urgent questions, call 203-869-1145. The on-call physician or physician assist will assist you. The after-hours line is for urgent matters only. Non-emergency questions for your surgeon should be addressed during your post-operative visits or normal business hours. Some patients find it helpful to bring a written list of questions to their post-operative appointment.