

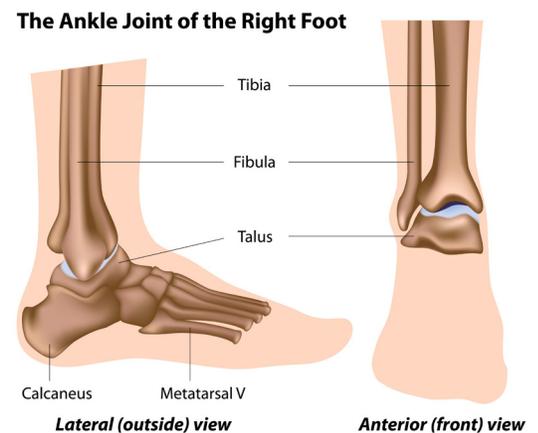
## Surgical Patient Education

# Ankle Fusion

## What is Ankle Fusion?

Ankle Fusion Surgery is a procedure performed to put the ankle in a fixed position and decrease pain due to arthritis.

The surgeon makes a precise cut to the foot and inserts hardware to fuse the bones in the ankle together and create stability in the joint.



## What are the Risks?

- **Infection** - There is always a risk of infection when you make surgical cuts to the skin, this is slightly higher with implanted hardware (plates and screws), but we do multiple things to decrease this risk, such as administer antibiotics and monitor your blood sugar if you are diabetic.
- **Bleeding** - There is a risk of bleeding as with all surgical incisions/procedures. This is minimal with ankle fusion procedure.
- **Damage to blood vessels or nerves** - There are many blood vessels and nerves in the area of the surgical procedure but damage to these tend to be minimal.

# What happens during the procedure?

- This is usually an outpatient procedure which means you will go home the same day.
- You will arrive to the surgery center and go to Pre-Op and be checked in.
- Then, you will be taken to the operating room and placed on monitors. You will be watched closely and you are put to sleep.
- After you are asleep, the surgeon will make an incisions to your foot and perform the procedure.
- Your skin will then be sutured closed. Gauze and a large bandage will be placed over the foot.
- You will be woken up. When you are stable, you will go home usually within 1-2 hours.

## Before Surgery

- You may be asked to stop certain medications such as aspirin or ibuprofen, be sure to check with your surgeon's office and anesthesia to see what medications to stop.
- You will be asked not to eat or drink the night before surgery, it is important that you follow these instructions.
- You will be asked to shower the night before or morning of surgery.
- You need to arrange help at home in preparation for surgery. You will not be able to walk on your foot for a minimum of 6-8 weeks and possibly longer.

## After Surgery

- You will have a bulky dressing to your foot afterwards that will stay on until you follow up with your surgeon.
- If you shower, use a waterproof dressing or bandage to cover your dressing to your foot so it does not get wet.
- You may be given a prescription for medication for pain, sometimes this can also be over the counter. It can be important to take the medicine as prescribed and alternate the medicine to get maximum pain control.
- Ice and elevation are the most effective ways to treat your pain after surgery. Use the ice as long as it decreases your pain.
- Keep your foot elevated as much as possible. This will make you more comfortable and decrease the risk of a blood clot.
- You usually do not need physical therapy.

# Recovery After an Ankle Fusion Surgery

## How long will I be out of work?

- You should prepare to be off work for up to **6-8 weeks** if your job cannot accommodate your restrictions. This means that if you cannot follow your doctor's instructions at work, you will need to be off.
- The recovery may be shorter or longer and you can sometimes go back to work quicker depending on your job and activities performed at your job.
- You will **NOT** be able to walk on your foot for a minimum of 6 weeks and maybe longer.
- You usually **DO NOT** need physical therapy.
- You will have sutures in your foot that will come out after 2 weeks.
- You will need crutches or a scooter afterwards.