



Post-Operative Advice at 2 Weeks Post Surgery



You are now 2 weeks post-op following your foot surgery

Stitches:

At this stage your wound dressings will usually have been removed. Any stitches will have been taken out. These occasionally bleed slightly, if this happens keep the area dry and covered for 24 hours.

Please use a clean cotton sock and place your foot into a trainer or sneaker type shoe. These ideally will have a thick sole, laces to tighten and should feel snug and supportive. If you are unsure what is suitable please ask one of the team.

Swelling is likely to continue for many months after an operation and can be the cause of discomfort and inconvenience for you. The correct choice of shoe for your recovery will make a great deal of difference to addressing your swelling and therefore to your recovery time.

The trainer/sneaker type shoe may feel tight at first but it will help compress some of the swelling, it is important that you persist with keeping your shoe on. Put it on first thing in the morning and keep it on as long as possible, preferably until you go to bed, and expect to continue with these shoes for up to 6—8 weeks or so before trying alternative footwear. Because the shoe feels tight it is tempting to wear a slipper or sandal for comfort.

Please **DO NOT** do this as it will encourage more swelling and is likely to delay your rehabilitation.

Bathing:

In most cases you will be able to start bathing the day following stitch removal. For the first couple of times you wash your foot, please do not soak it for long periods of time. Get it clean and get it out. If you notice any discharge from wound, cover the area with a clean dry dressing and contact the clinic for advice. Although it may be ok to bathe your foot, avoid swimming in a swimming pool for a further 2 weeks to allow the wound to strengthen.



Use of creams:

At the same timeframe you can start to firmly massage the scar with moisturising cream or oil.

Mr Kannegieter usually recommends BioOil or E45 cream.

Firmly massage the product along the length of the scar every day. Use your fingertips powered by your biceps to rub the product in. Being firm allows it to organise the developing scar tissue and prevent prominent and irritable scars. Do not use creams on open wounds.

Activities:

You can start to return to normal activities a bit at a time. Take your recovery one day at a time and increase your level of activity very gently. Sit and rest for short periods frequently during the day at first and you will find that you can gradually do more activity in between rests as time goes on. Moderate your activity levels accordingly. If you have to take painkillers or are getting a lot of pain at the end of the day, slow down, you are probably doing too much. As long as the pain is not deteriorating it is quite normal.

Be patient:

It can take up to a year before your foot feels entirely normal. Be patient with it, but if you feel you are not progressing or that things seem to be deteriorating please contact the clinic for advice and/or a review.

Walking:

When learning to walk again it is a natural reaction to tilt the foot to the outside to protect a painful area. This can become a bad habit if not addressed and can lead to different foot problems and strains. Every day concentrate on trying to step out from heel to toe, the weight starting at the back outside of the heel as your foot contacts the floor, then as your operated foot becomes the supporting foot try to feel the weight through the ball of the big toe joint, and then as you move forwards bend the big toe and push off with the big toe so that it is the last thing to touch the ground. At first you will be wary of doing this but persevering with your walking pattern will help you in the long term.



Driving:

You may start driving when you feel confident that you are comfortable enough to be safe. This will vary for different people and different operations. It is particularly important if you have had an operation on your right foot. You should feel in control of your vehicle and confident that you can perform an emergency stop.

Flying:

You should not plan long haul (longer than 4 hours) air travel within 6 weeks of your surgery. This can increase your risk of developing a blood clot.

Returning to work:

Most people return to work after about 6 weeks depending on the operation, and sometimes the nature of their job. When you do return to work you should try to organise your workload to lighter duties initially wherever possible. Your foot is likely to become quite swollen and painful by the end of the working day particularly if you are standing for long periods at a time, be prepared for this but be reassured your foot can withstand this if you have returned to work at the recommended time. The necessary time off work will be different in some cases but Mr Kannegieter will be able to recommend what is best for you.

Sport:

Avoid very repetitive or high impact activities such as hiking, running and step aerobics for the best part of 3 months particularly if your operation involved bone work with internal fixation. It takes time for the foot to become strong enough to withstand higher pressures and sudden impacts without damage or displacement to the operation site. As with your general rehabilitation, train up to serious sports gently and incrementally after your period of rest.

Useful numbers

Baddow Hospital

01245 671181

Baddow Emergency Contact Nurse

07591 977965