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Information Sheet

RECOVERY PLANNING

Introduction

We would like to reassure our patients that we do everything possible to make the recovery from surgery as smooth as possible. We know many patients worry about the effect having surgery will have, but this need not be the case. Recovery planning starts before surgery, progresses to the immediate recovery and healing phase, and ends in the return to normality. For many patients this means a better quality of life than before the operation.

Pre-operative recovery planning

Before planning surgery, we will discuss the impact that the surgery is likely to have on your day to day life. Activities such as walking, driving, sleeping and carrying out general daily duties have to be considered before embarking on surgery. If necessary, we can arrange a pre-operative assessment of your ability to manage at home, in order to ensure that all the necessary aids are in place prior to your returning home after surgery.

Immediate recovery

With some surgical procedures, we are able to allow the patient to continue walking with weight on the foot in a splint or plaster cast. For many other foot and ankle procedures, however, mobilising without weight bearing is essential to achieve solid healing and best results.

We understand that being unable to weight bear may present great problems for some patients. We do, however, have access to a wide range of excellent rehabilitation services to help during this most difficult phase of the recovery following surgery.

Initially you will be assessed on the ward by a physiotherapist. Crutches, Zimmer frames or walking sticks may be all that is required to start a patient mobilising. For a few patients we may recommend the Red Cross where wheel chairs can be hired for a few weeks (see www.redcross.org.uk). In other cases use of the K9 walking aid, which can be borrowed from most physiotherapy departments or purchased from John Reid & Sons in Christchurch (see www.walk-aid.co.uk), can make all the difference.

Initial Healing and Rehabilitation

Healing following foot and ankle surgery will usually take weeks but in some cases it may take months. This really depends on the condition being treated. Please see our 'Post-op Instructions' section which covers most of the procedures that we perform.

Once healing has been achieved the rehabilitation phase will start. Swelling and stiffness of the foot and ankle may be a feature of the early part of this phase and we will direct you to therapists skilled in reducing swelling and improving the range of motion of joints. The aim during this phase is to restore the foot and ankle to as close to normality as possible given what condition or deformity has been treated. With some conditions an immediate benefit can be seen but for other conditions achievement of full recovery may take some time and a lot of hard work.

All patients will be seen at regular appropriate intervals to monitor progress during this phase and of course we look out at all times for any problems or complications occurring.

Return to Normality

The final phase is full recovery and return to normality. This is the goal that we, the Consultants at the DFAC, strive to achieve for all our patients. We derive great pleasure from seeing a patient at the end of treatment cured of their pain, relieved of their discomfort or disability and enjoying the best possible cosmetic results following foot and ankle surgery.