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1st, 2nd & 3rd Tarso-Metatarsal Joint Arthrodesis

INTRODUCTION

Like all joints, the joints in the midfoot can be affected by arthritis. With the passage of time the arthritis causes increasing pain, swelling and loss of function. Fusing the most affected joint or joints is a reliable way to decrease the pain and improve the function of the foot. Fusing a joint means connecting the two bones on either side of the joint together. After 1st-3rd TMT joint arthrodesis, most patients are able to walk comfortably and have considerably less pain.

THE SURGERY

There are a number of steps to 1st – 3rd TMT joint fusion surgery. These include:

- i. general anaesthetic, intravenous antibiotics
- ii. incision(s) on top of the foot and inside of the foot.
- iii. removal of remaining cartilage
- iv. insertion of bone graft (often taken from the heel bone) and other cells to stimulate fusion
- v. fixation with staples and/or screws and/or plates
- vi. check x-rays
- vii. closure of wound with stitches
- viii. plaster back slab

THE RISKS OF SURGERY

All surgical procedures carry some risk. The risk of complications with 1st – 3rd TMT joint fusion surgery is low. Some of the risks with surgery include:

- Infection
- Problems with wound healing
- Nerve injury causing numbness, tingling and/or pins and needles.
- Non-union (when the bones don't joint together)
- Deep venous thrombosis/pulmonary embolism. (The risk of DVT increases with smoking, the oral contraceptive pill and hormone replacement therapy, immobility and obesity).
- Anaesthetic complications
- Drug allergy
- Ongoing pain

GUIDELINES FOR EXPECTED POST OPERATIVE RECOVERY

Keep dressings dry and intact until post operative appointment. Keep foot elevated as much as possible, especially for initial 72 hours.

Removal of stitches/sutures: 10-14 days at first post operative appointment.

Clexane injections (to prevent deep venous thrombosis): 10-14 days. Pain killers may be required for up to 2 weeks. Antibiotics for up to 2 weeks.

Protected weight bearing:

- 12 weeks with crutches and plaster or boot
- Non/touch weight bearing first 6 weeks.
- Partial weight bearing (up to 30kg) in Aircast walking boot for second 6 weeks

Return to most activities: within 6 months. Full recovery: up to 12 months.

Every patient's recovery is individual and depends on the severity of the injury and the complexity of the surgery.

ANY PROBLEMS

During office hours contact Dr Wines' office on (02) 9409 0500.

After hours please contact the hospital where your surgery was performed.