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1st METATARSOPHALANGEAL JOINT FUSION

INTRODUCTION

The joint at the base of the big toe (1st metatarsophalangeal joint) is commonly affected by arthritis. Fusion of the joint is the most reliable method of relieving pain and improving function. After 1st metatarsophalangeal joint fusion, most patients have little or no discomfort and are able to live a very active life.

THE SURGERY

1st metatarsophalangeal joint fusion surgery has a number of steps. These include:

- i. general anaesthetic, intravenous antibiotics
- ii. incision along inside of big toe
- iii. removal of remaining joint cartilage
- iv. insertion of bone graft
- v. fixation with plate and screws
- vi. check x-ray
- vii. closure of wound with stitches/sutures
- viii. insertion of Painbuster (local anaesthetic infusion pump)

RISKS OF SURGERY

All surgical procedures carry some risk. Fortunately the risk of complications with 1st metatarsophalangeal joint surgery is low. Some of the risks of surgery include:

- Infection
- Problems with wound healing
- Nerve injury causing numbness, tingling and/or pins and needles.
- Scarring
- Non union (the bone doesn't fuse 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 foot elevated as much as possible, especially for initial 72 hours. Keep dressings dry and intact until post operative appointment.

Pain killers may be required for up to 2 weeks. Antibiotics for up to 2 weeks.

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

Protected weight bearing: 6 weeks on crutches

- post operative heel weight bearing wedge shoe.
- crutches as required.
- Maximum comfortable heel height 3 cm.

Resumption of most activities: 12 weeks. Full recovery: 3-6 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.