

DR ANDREW WINES MBBS FRACS (Orth)
Adult and Paediatric Orthopaedic Surgeon
Foot, Ankle and Trauma Surgery

REMOVAL OF HARDWARE.

INTRODUCTION

Patients often need screws, plates, nails or wires removed after a period of time to improve function or reduce irritation or pain. Hardware removal involves exposing the hardware to be removed and reconstituting the surrounding tissues.

THE SURGERY

Surgery to remove hardware includes:

- i. general anaesthetic, intravenous antibiotics.
- ii. incision over the affected area.
- iii. identification of hardware.
- iv. removal of hardware with appropriate equipment.
- v. Irrigation of wound if required.
- vi. wound closure with stiches/sutures.
- vii. infiltration with local anaesthetic.

THE RISKS OF SURGERY

All surgical procedures carry some risk. The risk of complications with this surgery is low. Some of the risks include:

- Infection.
- Problems with wound healing.
- Joint stiffness.
- Nerve injury causing numbness, tingling and/or pins and needles.
- Deep venous thrombosis/pulmonary embolism. (The risk of DVT increases with smoking, the oral contraceptive pill, 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.

Commence gentle range of motion exercises on the day of surgery.

Removal of stiches/sutures at the first post operative appointment, at 10-14 days.

Pain killers may be required: Up to 2 weeks.

Antibiotics for up to 2 weeks.

WEIGHT BEARING

You may weight bear as tolerated following the surgery. For the first 2 weeks this may be in a post operative shoe to accommodate your bandage. Crutches may be required to assist mobilisation.

Return to most activities: 6 weeks. Full recovery: Within 3 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.