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TRIPLE ARTHRODESIS

INTRODUCTION

Triple arthrodesis/fusion is a reliable and effective method of treating arthrodesis of the joints of the hindfoot. In a triple arthrodesis three joints (subtalar, talo-navicular and calcaneo-cuboid) are fused together. After a triple arthrodesis most patients have considerably less pain and improved foot function.

THE SURGERY

There are a number of steps to triple arthrodesis surgery. These include:

- i. nerve block, general anaesthetic, antibiotics
- ii. incisions over inside and outside of the foot
- iii. removal of remaining cartilage from the subtalar, talo-navicular, and calcaneo-cuboid joints
- iv. insertion of bone graft (often from the heel bone) and other cells to stimulate fusion.
- v. fixation with screws and staples
- vi. check x-rays
- vii. closure of wound with stitches
- viii. back slab

THE RISKS OF SURGERY

All surgical procedures carry some risk. The risk of complications with triple arthrodesis 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.
- 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. Antibiotics for up to 2 weeks. Pain killers may be required for up to two weeks.

Protected weight bearing:

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

A plaster or boot needs to be worn in bed for at least the first 6 weeks. Return to most activities: within 6 months. Fully 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.