Possible Complications of Foot or Ankle Surgery

The goal of foot and ankle surgery is to increase the quality of life for patients suffering from a disabling foot or ankle problem. It is important for both you and your family to understand the surgical procedure, possible risks of surgery and options. Once you understand the surgery and possible risks, you will be asked to sign a surgical consent form to allow the surgeon and his foot or ankle team to operate.

Possible Complications

There are three groups of complications associated with foot surgery. Major complications in foot surgery are very rare and are those associated with any type of operation. These complications include infections, blood clots or anesthesia related problems such as a reaction to the anesthesia.

Complications specific to foot surgery include numbness in the toes, painful scars, pain when wearing shoes or walking, incomplete correction of the problem and recurrence of the deformity. Rarely, surgery can result in gangrene and loss of the toes, foot or ankle.

Your foot and ankle team is aware of the possible complications that can occur and will take measures to avoid or minimize them. Be aware of these risks, ask your team questions and discuss any concerns you may have.

More on next page ➔
• **Blood Clots**

Blood clots may occur anywhere in blood vessels when the flow of blood is slowed. The most common place for blood clots to occur after surgery is in your legs. This is why it is important for you to tell the nursing staff if you ever have any complaints of pain, redness, swelling of the incision or warmth in your legs while you are in the hospital or even after you have gone home.

• **Infection**

After every surgery there is the possibility of developing an infection at the wound or incision site. Your doctor may give you antibiotics during surgery to help prevent infection. The nursing staff will check your temperature and your incision for signs of infection. It is important for you to do this as well at home.

**Call your surgeon’s office if you:**

- Have any redness, drainage or swelling of the incision
- Develop a temperature of 101 degrees or more

• **Anesthesia Reaction**

It is very important to tell your surgeon and anesthesiologist if you have ever had any reaction to anesthesia or pain medicine with previous surgery. Some patients are more sensitive than others to anesthesia and pain medicines.

In rare cases, some loss of function or loss of the limb may occur. If you or your family would like to speak to someone in more detail about any complications, please talk to one of the staff.

- **Talk to your doctor or others on your health care team if you have questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email: health-info@osu.edu.**