



# A Therapy Guide to Foot & Ankle Surgery and Recovery

Adam G. Miller, MD



# WELCOME

We are glad that you have chosen Dr. Miller for your foot and ankle surgery. Our goal is to make this experience as pleasant as possible for you. If you have any questions about your hospital stay, rehabilitation or recovery period, please contact Dr. Miller's office for more information specific to your surgery.

## CONTACT US

Main Number 513-354-3700

Surgery Center 513-401-6611

Financial Inquiries 513-580-7530

Workers' Comp. & Disability Services 513-354-3700



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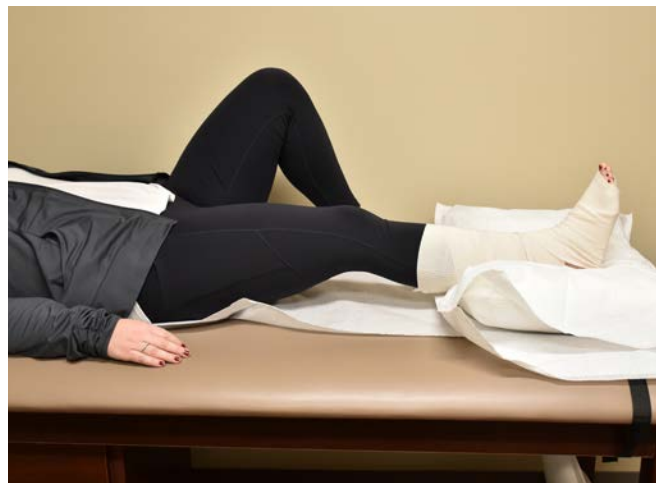
# What to Expect During Your Surgery and Recovery

After surgery you are expected to stay off the foot in almost all cases. You will likely receive instructions to be non-weight bearing. This is called **non-weight bearing** and means you cannot put any weight at all on the operated foot, until Dr. Miller or his physician assistant says that it is safe to do so. You will return to the office for a follow-up visit about 10-14 days after surgery.



After surgery you will be placed in a wrap or splint. These dressings will help protect the leg and keep it sterile while the skin heals. These **dressings are to stay on until removed in clinic**. The splints often feel heavy and this is normal. Often one feels that it is burning or rubbing on the foot as feeling returns after surgery. This is often normal. The dressings will be removed in clinic at your first appointment.

Dr. Miller will want you to rest as much as possible right after surgery. Your foot will swell and may become painful when left hanging down. The operative leg should be elevated consistently to heart level during the first 1-2 weeks after surgery unless going the bathroom or similar. Failure to do so may compromise wounds and outcome.



# Prepare Your Home

Below are tips to create a successful postoperative environment in your home. Make sure you plan ahead and work on these ideas **BEFORE** surgery. If you feel uncomfortable with certain risks in your home, Dr. Miller's staff can schedule you a teaching physical therapy visit. You will need help during your postoperative time. Plan ahead to have family or friends be ready to assist.

## ENTRANCE

- How will you get into/out of your house after surgery?
- Do you have to climb steps? How many?
- Do your steps have railings?
- Is there an easier way in **without steps** that you can use?

## DRIVING

You will **NOT** be able to drive immediately after your surgery. At your follow-up visit with Dr. Miller about 10-14 days after surgery, you will learn when you are allowed to drive again. As a general rule you will not be able to drive with your surgical foot again until you are able to walk 100% on the operative side. This timing is dictated by Dr. Miller and his staff.

Factors that affect driving after foot and ankle surgery:

- Use of pain medication
- Which foot is operated on
- Length of nonweightbearing after surgery
- How driving motions of the foot may impact the surgical site

## MEDICATIONS

Dr. Miller will prescribe pain medicine to help keep you comfortable while you are recuperating after surgery. Your prescription along with other medications will have been called into the pharmacy you listed with us in the office prior to surgery. If you think you will need a refill of any medication, make an effort to call the office during business hours. Often the person on call may not be able to help you as easily.

## BEDROOM

- Where will you sleep at home after surgery?
- Do you have to climb stairs to get to the bedroom?
- Can you get a walker, crutches, knee roller or a wheelchair through the bedroom door and to the bed?
- Can you sleep on the first floor to avoid climbing steps?

## BATHROOM

- Is your bathroom accessible?
- Can you get a walker, crutches or a wheelchair through the door?

## BATHING

**NO tub bath until cleared to do so by Dr. Miller.**

You will not be able to get your foot wet while you have a splint or dressing on the leg/foot. Some devices are commercially available to keep an extremity dry. If planning on using one, try testing it out prior to surgery. No device is perfect and all can leak at some point.

Hint: A **shower chair** or a **tub bench** allows you to sit down and shower safely after surgery.

## KITCHEN

- You will need to have easy meals available.
- Frozen dinners are quick and require minimal preparation.
- Keep frequently used items within easy reach on countertops and in the refrigerator.
- If possible, plan to have someone assist you with grocery shopping.

## LAUNDRY

- Is your laundry room accessible?
- Are the washer and dryer difficult to reach?
- Consider asking a family member or friend to assist you with your laundry.

## RUGS

Remove all throw rugs or scatter rugs before you come in for surgery because they have the potential to trip you.

## PETS

- It can be dangerous for people who use equipment (walker, crutches or wheelchair) to walk and move around with pets under foot.
- We suggest having a friend or family member take care of your pet for at least the first 2 weeks. Taking care of a pet (walking a dog, cleaning a kitty litter box, etc.) can be very difficult when you are not able to stand on your operated leg after surgery

## USING A WHEEL CHAIR

If you are planning on using a wheelchair at home, please consider:

- Doorways must be at least 28" wide across for a standard wheelchair to fit.
- Wheelchairs may be lifted up **ONE** step or curb with the patient in them -your therapist can show you how this is done safely.
- **If the bathroom is not wide enough, you will need a bedside commode for toileting (see Durable Medical Equipment on page 3) or plan to use other assist devices such as crutches.**
- Carpet makes it harder to push a wheelchair.
- In the kitchen, make sure you can reach commonly used items from wheelchair height.

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## GENERAL HOME SAFETY TIPS

1. On the nonoperative leg, wear footwear that gives you good support and traction. Tennis shoes/sneakers with good tread on the bottom are great options.
2. Install non-skid mats on the shower or tub floor.
3. A hand-held shower can make showering much easier after surgery.
4. Make sure feet are dry before getting out of tub, so you don't slip.
5. Sit on a sturdy chair while brushing teeth, shaving, applying makeup, cooking, etc.
6. **Do not sit on chairs that have wheels.**
7. Sit in firm chairs with armrests. They are much easier to get up from.
8. If you are using a walker, do NOT hold things in your hand as you use your walker. Walker bags are available for purchase on-line or at local pharmacies.

## WHERE TO PURCHASE EQUIPMENT

- |                        |                     |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| • Amazon.com           | • Lowe's            |
| • CVS                  | • Northern Pharmacy |
| • Drugstore.com        | • Target            |
| • eBay                 | • Walgreens         |
| • Healthsuperstore.com | • Wal-Mart          |
| • Home Depot           |                     |

# Surgery Check Lists

## WHAT TO DO THE NIGHT BEFORE YOUR SURGERY

Prior to surgery, a simple step you can take to enhance your successful recovery is carefully washing your skin the night before, or preferably, the morning of your surgery. This helps decrease the number of germs on the skin, reducing the risk of infection. If you have had an injury and currently have a splint on, please wash the rest of your body keeping the splint dry. Follow these instructions to ensure that your skin is clean before surgery:

- ☐ **SHOWER WITH AN ANTIBACTERIAL LIQUID SOAP** containing the ingredient chlorhexidine gluconate or CHG (brand name is Hibiclens). The soap can be purchased at most local pharmacies. Purchase the 4 ounce bottle with the main active ingredient being chlorhexidine gluconate. **Note: if you are allergic to chlorhexidine, do not use this soap.**
- ☐ **WASH YOUR HAIR FIRST** using your normal shampoo. Thoroughly rinse your hair and body of any shampoo.
- ☐ **FOLLOW MANUFACTURER'S INSTRUCTIONS WHEN APPLYING CHG** to the entire body from the neck down (including under arms and groin). **Avoid contact with your face, head, eyes, ears, mouth and genital area.** Gently wash your body, especially the area where surgery will be performed, and leave soap on for 3 minutes.
- ☐ **RINSE YOUR BODY THOROUGHLY** and gently pat dry using a clean, dry towel. Do not apply lotion or perfume to your body after showering with CHG soap.
- ☐ **WEAR FRESHLY LAUNDERED SLEEPWEAR** and sleep on clean sheets.
- ☐ **WEAR CLEAN, COMFORTABLE CLOTHING** on the day of your surgery.

## WHAT TO BRING TO THE HOSPITAL ON THE DAY OF YOUR SURGERY

- ☐ **DRIVER'S LICENSE** or passport for identification
- ☐ **INSURANCE CARDS**
- ☐ **COPIES OF ADVANCE DIRECTIVES OR LIVING WILL** (if you have them)
- ☐ **MEDICATION LIST:** Write down a list of all the medicines you take, dosages and the time of day you take them, including over-the-counter drugs and prescription medicines. **DO NOT BRING ANY MEDICATIONS FROM HOME!**
- ☐ **CLOTHES:** pajamas, underwear, socks, shirts  
You will have a big, bulky dressing on your leg so loose-fitting clothing is recommended for your lower body, such as sweat pants or shorts.
- ☐ **FOOTWEAR:** rubber-soled shoes with good traction (such as tennis shoes) Please do not wear backless shoes for safety.
- ☐ **TOILETRIES:** soap, shampoo, shaving items, toothbrush, toothpaste, comb, make-up, brush, deodorant
- ☐ **PERSONAL EQUIPMENT:** glasses, hearing aids, dentures
- ☐ **ASSISTIVE DEVICES:** crutches, walker, or wheelchair. If you have your own equipment, please bring it with you and label it with your name. If you do not have any equipment, necessary items will be provided for you at the hospital or surgical center through your insurance.
- ☐ **C-PAP** or external breathing devices  
If you typically use assistive breathing devices at home, please bring them with you and label them with your name. Your nursing team will discuss arrangements for using them while in the hospital.
- ☐ **FAMILY MEMBER OR CAREGIVER**  
Your caregiver participates in family training with the team and takes you home when you are discharged from the hospital.

# What to Expect at the Hospital

- You have received information/instructions regarding procedures and postoperative care from Dr. Miller's office.
- You will be called prior to the day of surgery regarding when to arrive at the surgery center/hospital.
- After you register, you will proceed to the preoperative area, where the experienced staff of nurses will assist you. You will also meet with Dr. Miller and the anesthesiologist at that time.
- Next, you will move into the operating room, where the nurses will prepare you for surgery and Dr. Miller will perform your surgery.
- After surgery, you will be taken to the Post Anesthesia Care Unit where you will stay until you wake up after surgery. This is also known as the recovery room.
- From the Recovery Room, you will be discharged to home. Less commonly you may be transferred to the orthopaedic inpatient unit in the hospital.

## If You Stay in the Hospital Overnight

Before you are discharged from the hospital, our goal is to make sure you are safe to return home. The day after surgery, a physical therapist (PT) will come to see you in your room. The PT will inquire about your home situation and any equipment that you have or may need. The therapist will also assess and train you in the skills you need in order to go home safely. These skills include moving around in bed, transferring from the bed and chair, moving from sitting to standing and walking with the appropriate assistive device—all while not putting any weight on the foot/ankle that had surgery. If you have difficulty with your activities of daily living, such as bathing, dressing or moving safely around the bathroom, you may also see an occupational therapist (OT).

In addition to your safety, our goal is to help you manage your pain. Your nurse will assist you with pain medication. Keeping the foot elevated above your heart when you are in bed or sitting in a chair and using ice on the foot/ankle can also help to reduce pain.

## Going Home from the Hospital

You must arrange for someone to drive you home after surgery. This is best completed **before** surgery. You will **NOT** be able to drive home, and you may not drive until cleared to do so by Dr. Miller.

### GETTING IN AND OUT OF THE CAR

#### Front Seat Car Transfer:

1. Prior to car entry, make sure the seat is back completely from the dashboard and the back of the seat is reclined. This enables you more leg room to swing the operative leg into the car.
2. Turn around so you are facing away from the car and back up to the car with your walker/crutches.
3. When you feel the back of your legs touch the seat, reach one hand back for the seat and bend at your waist to lower yourself down. **Keep your operative leg off of the ground!**
4. Swing your operative leg in gently.



# Home Exercise Program

It is important to continue an exercise regimen after discharge to help improve your overall physical conditioning after surgery. This includes general exercises that help build muscle tone and flexibility, without putting strain on the affected joint. These will be taught while you are in the hospital. If you are an outpatient, consult with Dr. Miller before beginning these exercises. As an inpatient, you will be taught these exercises by the therapy staff. **Do not perform exercises to the operative area. Your splint/sandal/dressings are meant to protect the area of surgery and immobilization in this area is crucial to outcomes. Otherwise perform as directed.**

**Exercise 1 — Ankle pumps**



**Exercise 2 — Gluteal Squeezes**



**Exercise 3 — Quad Sets**



**Exercise 4 — Heel Slides**



**Exercise 5 — Straight Leg Raises**



# Safe Mobility After Surgery

## THIS INFORMATION IS FOR REVIEW PURPOSES ONLY!

Please DO NOT TRY THIS AT HOME until you have been properly trained by our therapy or nursing staff.

### CHAIR TRANSFERS USING A WALKER

#### To stand up:

1. Scoot forward in the chair until you are sitting on the edge.
2. Lean forward and push down through the armrests, using your non-operative leg to stand up.
3. Keep your operated foot off the floor.



4. Once standing, reach for the walker first with one hand, then the other.
5. Get your balance.



#### REMEMBER

It is easiest to get up from a firm, sturdy chair with armrests.

## CHAIR TRANSFERS USING A WALKER

### To sit down:

1. Back up until you feel the back of your leg touching the chair.
2. Move your operated foot out in front of you, keeping the foot off the ground.
3. Reach back for the arm of the chair first with one hand, then the other.
4. Lower yourself slowly into the chair, keeping your operated foot off the ground.



## WALKING WITH A WALKER

1. Advance walker forward so back legs of the walker are even with the toes of the non-operative leg.
2. Slightly lean forward and push down through hands on walker handles so most of your bodyweight is through your arms. Your elbows should be slightly bent.
3. Move your good foot forward until foot is in the middle of the walker, while supporting your body weight on the walker.



### REMEMBER

Your operated foot should never touch the floor. Do not use it for balance.



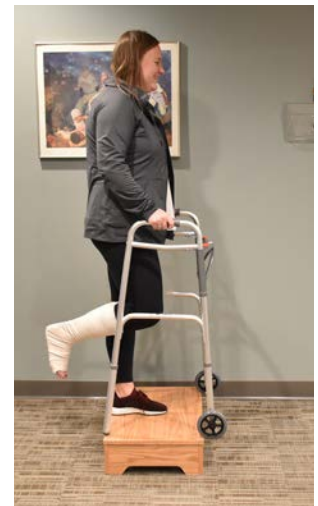
## STEPPING DOWN OFF OF A CURB USING A WALKER:

1. Bring non-operative foot to the edge of the curb.
2. Place walker down on the ground below the curb.
3. Hold onto the walker and push your weight down through your hands.
4. Keeping your operated leg out in front of you, lower your non-operative leg down onto the ground.



## CLIMBING UP A CURB USING A WALKER

1. **Back up** to the curb until the walker legs hit the curb wall.
2. Push your weight down through your hands.
3. Keeping your operated leg out in front of you, lift your good leg on the curb. You will need to get your non-operative foot back as far as possible to allow room for the walker on the curb.
4. Bring walker up onto the curb.





## CLIMBING UP A CURB USING A WALKER AND A CHAIR

1. Back up to the curb until the walker legs hit the curb wall.
2. Reach back for the chair with first one hand then the other.
3. Lower yourself slowly into the chair, keeping your operated foot off the ground.
4. Keeping your operated leg out in front of you, lift your good leg on the curb.
5. Pivot your body around in the chair so you have room to stand up with the walker.
6. Bring walker up onto the curb.



## CHAIR TRANSFERS WITH CRUTCHES

To stand up:

1. Place both crutches in one hand and hold hand grips. Place the other hand on the arm of the chair.
2. Scoot forward to the edge of the chair.
3. Lean forward and push up with both hands and your good leg, keeping your operated leg off the floor.
4. Get your balance.
5. Place crutches under arms, one at a time.



### REMEMBER

Be sure to keep your operated foot off of the floor!

## CHAIR TRANSFERS WITH CRUTCHES

### To sit down:

1. Approach the chair.
2. Turn around using small steps and back up to the chair, until you feel the chair against the back of your good leg.
3. Place both crutches in one hand.
4. Reach the other hand back for the arm of the chair.
5. Bend forward at the waist and sit down slowly, keeping the operated leg up off the floor.



## WALKING WITH CRUTCHES

1. While balancing on your good leg, move both crutches at the same time.
2. Crutches should be about shoulder width apart and even on the floor.
3. Push down through hands.
4. Step forward with the strong leg, keeping the operated leg off the floor.



## CLIMBING UP STAIRS WITH CRUTCHES

**AS A GENERAL RULE, STAIRS ARE NOT SAFE WITH CRUTCHES OR OTHER ASSIST DEVICES.**

## BUMPING UP STAIRS ON YOUR BOTTOM

**Setup: Place a step-stool at the top of the stairs, and a chair just behind the stool**

1. Back up to the stairs until your good foot hits the stair.
2. Reach back for the stairs and sit on the step that is at a comfortable height for you (typically the second step from the bottom).
3. Keeping your operated leg out in front of you and off the ground, reach both hands back for the next higher step.
4. Lift (bump) yourself up onto the next step using your arms and your good leg. Continue this way until you reach the top of the stairs.
5. Lift yourself up from the top step onto the step stool.
6. Then, lift yourself up from the stool onto the chair. Swing your legs around to sit fully on the chair and then stand up with your assistive device.

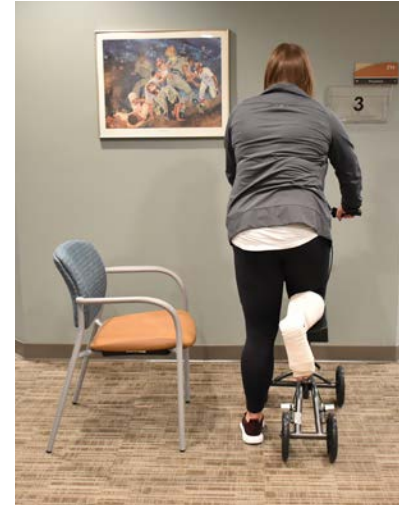




## CHAIR TRANSFERS WITH A KNEE WALKER

### To stand up:

1. Scoot forward in the chair until you are sitting on the edge.
2. Lean forward and push down through the armrests and use your non-operative leg to stand up.
3. Keep your operated foot off the floor.
4. Once standing, reach for the knee walker with one hand. Continue holding onto the chair.
5. Pivot your body around and place the knee of your operated leg on the pads.
6. Get your balance and adjust your positioning of your operated leg until you are comfortable.



### To sit down:

1. Approach the chair until you are right in front of it.
2. Reach out with one hand and take hold of one arm of the chair.
3. Keeping your operated foot off the floor, pivot your body around so your bottom faces the chair.
4. Bring other hand back to the other arm of the chair.
5. Gently lower yourself down into the chair, keeping your operated foot off the floor.





# Using and Accessing Ambulatory Aides

As you can see from the previous pages, there are a number of ambulatory aides you can use to assist you in maintaining your non-weight bearing status. As the patient, you must feel comfortable with ambulatory aide you choose – everyone is different, just because your friend prefers a knee scooter does not mean you will.

Safety is the number one goal while you are non-weight bearing. Some patients find it beneficial to meet with a physical therapist prior to their surgery to better determine which ambulatory aide is best for them as well as making sure they feel comfortable getting around safely; this is called PREHAB. If this is something you are interested, please contact our office so that we may appropriately get you set up for this.

Many patients do find it extremely beneficial to obtain their ambulatory aid of choice prior to surgery. This allows you to practice using it – even if you do not attend prehab – and increases your comfort level with the device.

If you choose to use a walker or crutches, it is recommended that you be fitted for these as they are height specific – even if you already have them at home. Ensuring that the device is appropriate for you increases your safety and benefits you greatly.

Please feel free to contact our office if you have any questions or concerns.

## WHERE TO RENT OR BUY AMBULATORY AIDES

**Below you will find a list of local companies that offer different types of ambulatory aides for patients. Please call or stop in for availability**

**Beacon Summit Office:** 513-354-3710 500 E. Business Way, Cincinnati, OH 45241

**Beacon West Office:** 513-354-7799 (call for IN office info also) 6480 Harrison Ave, Cincinnati, OH 45247

**Beacon East Office:** 513-247-4359 463 Ohio Pike, Cincinnati, OH 45255

**Beacon Northern Kentucky Office:** 859-905-1006 600 Rodeo Dr, Erlanger, KY 41018

Knee scooters: rental only \$75/month self pay

### **Mullaney's Pharmacy and Home Health Care**

793-6898 9300 Kenwood Rd, Cincinnati, OH 45242

513-587-1468 7846 Cincinnati Dayton Rd, Cincinnati, OH 45069

513-731-1400 6096 Montgomery Rd, Pleasant Ridge, OH 45213

513-587-1474 5907 Cheviot Rd, Cincinnati, OH 45247

Knee scooters: rental only \$69/month self pay

**Queen City Med Mart, Inc.** 513-733-8100 10780 Reading Rd, Cincinnati, OH 45241

Knee scooters: rental only. They can bill your insurance if its In-Network – \$79.95/month with steering, \$59.95/month without steering. To bill your insurance, they will need a Rx and clinical dictation.

**Kunkle Medical** 513-231-1943 7717 Beechmont Ave, Cincinnati, OH 45255

Knee scooters: rental only \$85/month self pay

**Bernens Pharmacy** 513-471-7575 5053 Glenway Ave, Cincinnati, OH 45238

Knee scooters: rental only. They can bill some insurances or \$75/month self pay

# Experience the Beacon Difference



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