

ANKLE ARTHROSCOPY

Ankle arthroscopy or 'keyhole surgery of the ankle' involves making a small incision in the joint to allow the internal structures to be observed using a camera. Further incisions can be made to allow instruments to be introduced into the joint to treat a number of conditions affecting the ankle such as damage to the bearing surface, loose bodies and bony spurs. The procedure is usually performed through two small incisions approximately one centimetre long over the front of the ankle. Sometimes a third incision is made at the back of the ankle.

The Operation

Most ankle arthroscopies are performed as a day case procedure. You will be given a time and date for your surgery along with any special instructions. Please ensure that you bring any x-rays or scans to the hospital on the morning of the operation. Both the surgeon and anaesthetist will see you before the operation. They will explain the procedure and ask you to sign a consent form. You should confirm the ankle that is to be operated on and take the opportunity to ask for more information if you wish. At the end of the procedure the ankle itself and the small incisions are injected with local anaesthetic to help with pain relief. In addition your anaesthetist may have used a local nerve block to numb the area in the postoperative period. Finally a padded bandage is applied over the dressings and the foot may be placed in a postoperative splint or orthotic boot.

After the Operation

When you return home you may find that the ankle becomes more uncomfortable as the local anaesthetic wears off. You should take the pain medication given to you according to the instructions as required. Keep the foot elevated as much as possible. If the dressing or splint feels too tight then it is perfectly acceptable to loosen it.

For the first 48 hours following the procedure you should keep the foot elevated as much as possible. The splint/orthotic boot is designed to prevent excessive movement and reduce postoperative pain and swelling and hasten the recovery process. The dressings on your ankle do not need to be changed until your follow up appointment. This will normally be 6-10 days following surgery.

After the first 48 hours of elevation of your foot it is reasonable to become more mobile on your crutches, putting as much weight through the foot as is comfortable. Walking, however, should be limited to indoors as much as possible.

If you are getting severe pain or other signs or symptoms that concern you please do not hesitate to get in contact using the number below.

Possible Complications

Although the risks of surgery are minimised wherever possible, no procedure is entirely risk-free. Possible complications of arthroscopy of the ankle include anaesthetic complications, wound or joint infections, prolonged wound leakage and deep venous thrombosis (DVT) - blood clots in the calves. It is possible to have some numbness around the scars which usually becomes less noticeable with time.