

Introduction to Foot or Ankle Surgery

Four out of every five adults will have some sort of foot problem. In many cases, conservative care can alleviate most of these problems. This might include various treatments, such as arch supports, physical therapy, medications, injections or special shoes. If these treatments do not relieve a painful foot condition, another treatment is surgery.

Indications for Surgery and Goals to Achieve

- In general, surgery is indicated in 4 instances:
 - ▶ Pain
 - ▶ Problems wearing shoes or walking comfortably
 - ▶ Inability to perform or participate in desired activities
 - ▶ Preventing an existing painful condition from getting worse or causing other problems
- These indications for surgery relate to the following 4 basic goals that we hope to achieve:
 - ▶ Relieve pain
 - ▶ Restore proper function
 - ▶ Prevent problems from recurring
 - ▶ Improve appearance

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Foot surgery can provide relief from problems that do not respond to conservative care in most cases.

Anyone from infancy through adulthood can have a painful and disabling foot problem, although children under the age of 12 usually do not complain of pain. Similarly, athletes tend not to complain of foot pain for longer periods of time than non-athletes, until the problem becomes more severe. This can complicate treatment for the athlete and will result in wear and tear on bones, joints and soft tissues.

Informed Consent

You must sign a consent form before surgery. This form lists important information about the surgery that the doctor must explain and that you must understand. The form typically lists your name and age, the type of surgery to be done, the date and time of consent, and gives authorization to the doctor to do the surgery.

The nature and purpose of the operation, other possible methods of treatment, risks involved and complications are explained. Most importantly, it states that there is not a 100% guarantee of results. There is the possibility of reoccurrence, infection, decreased motion or excess scar tissue after surgery. Although complications are unusual, you must know what to expect and what can be achieved.

- It is the doctor's responsibility to explain 3 important facts about the patient's foot problem:
 - ▶ What the problem is
 - ▶ Why the problem is there
 - ▶ Ways to treat the problem

Since most surgeries are elective, you must then make the decision of whether or not to have the surgery based largely on information provided by the doctor.

- **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.**