ACHILLES TENDON REPAIR

Anesthesia: General with nerve block

Type of Surgery: Outpatient

Length of Procedure: 1-2 hours

GENERAL FACTS

Rupture (tearing) of the Achilles tendon is a common condition that often occurs when there is a sudden contraction of the calf muscle while the foot is pushing off or planted on the ground. Patients often describe the sensation of something or someone hitting the back of the calf. Generally there is associated pain and difficulty or weakness with walking.

A ruptured tendon can be treated in splint followed by immobilization in a Cast boot or with surgery. Good results can often obtained regardless of approach taken. You and your surgeon will discuss the best option for you.

SURGICAL TREATMENT

Surgery involves making an incision over the region of the Achilles, bringing both ends back together, and suturing them with a heavy suture material. This may require anchors to be placed into the bone and may also require use of donor tissue or tendon.

RISKS OF SURGERY

- All surgery has risks
- Bleeding
- Infection
- Skin healing issues. Nicotine use significantly increases this risk!
- Nerve injury: the sural nerve provides sensation to the outside of the foot and is in the area of the incision. This nerve can be injured as it is moved during the surgery. This can cause numbness/tingling that can be permanent although it typically resolves within a few months after surgery
- Vessel Injury: Rarely a blood vessel can be injured
- Disease transmission from donor tissue
- Continued pain/swelling
- Stiffness
- Loss of strength
- Recurrent injury
- Loss of calf muscle size
- Need for additional surgery
  - If wound healing issues occur, you may require extensive plastic surgery with a less than optimal recovery.
POSTOPERATIVE RECOVERY

- You will not be putting any weight on your foot/ankle for at least 2 weeks
- Expect it to take 9-12 months before you start to feel like you did prior to injury
- The repaired tendon will always feel thick

POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

- **Day 1**
  - You will be in a bulky splint. DO NOT REMOVE THE dressing
  - Elevate above the level of your heart for 72 hours and then as much as possible
  - DO NOT put any weight on your foot/ankle
  - Use crutches/roll-a-bout
  - Start taking your pain medication as soon as you start to feel tingling.
  - Take anti-nausea medicine as needed

- **1-2 Weeks**
  - First postoperative visit
  - Splint will be removed
  - Sutures will be removed if the wound is doing well
  - You will be placed in a boot/cast with heel wedges depending on the condition of the wound
  - You will be started on early motion and be allowed to put some weight on your foot with crutches

- **4 weeks**
  - PT started per protocol
  - Weight bearing advanced in boot and crutches discontinued

- **6 weeks**
  - Discontinue all wedges and being weaning out of the boot
  - No barefoot walking
  - Continue PT per protocol

- **8 weeks**
  - Discontinue the boot
  - Use heel lift in sneaker

- **12 weeks**
  - Advance to higher level activities with physical therapy