ANKLE LATERAL LIGAMENT RECONSTRUCTION

Anesthesia: General with nerve block

Type of Surgery: outpatient

Length of Surgery: 1-2 hours

GENERAL FACTS

A severe ankle sprain, or multiple sprains injure the ligaments of the ankle. When the ligaments are torn/stretch, the ankle can become loose. Often this is due to injury to 2 ligaments on the outside of the ankle. Initial treatment generally consists of icing and resting the ankle followed by physical therapy. However, if the ankle does not improve, it may be necessary to have the ligaments repaired in surgery.

SURGICAL TREATMENT

There are two ways to reconstruct the ligaments. The first and most common method involves making an incision on the lateral (outside) of the ankle and reattaching the ligaments to the bone. This often requires placement of anchors into the bone in order to hold the ligament in place while it heals. The second method involves using a tendon graft from a tissue bank or elsewhere on your body in order to reconstruct the ligaments and tighten the ankle has a different recovery than the one listed below.

RISKS OF SURGERY

- All surgery has risks
- Bleeding
- Infection
- Nerve injury: Small nerves exist in the area of the incisions. Care is taken not to injure one of these nerves but it can occur. This can result in pain as well as numbness/tingling in the foot/ankle although it generally resolves after a few months.
- Continued pain/swelling
- Continued laxity (looseness) of the ankle
- Stiffness
- Reinjury
- Need for further surgery

POSTOPERATIVE RECOVERY

- The ankle will be immobilized 2 weeks following surgery in a splint
- You will need crutches or a roll-a-bout
• You will not be able to drive for at least 6 weeks if it is your right ankle that is involved although it may take longer
• Expect to have swelling in your ankle for at least 6 months in not more.
• Expect the ankle to continue to improve for 9-12 months after surgery

POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

• Day 1
  o You will be placed in a bulky splint. DO NOT REMOVE
  o Elevate your ankle above the level of your heart for 72 hours and as much as possible thereafter
  o Expect numbness/tingling for 12-72 hours if you had a block completed by the anesthesiologist
  o You may notice some bloody drainage through your dressing
  o DO NOT put any weight on your ankle

• 2 Weeks
  o First postoperative visit.
  o Splint removed
  o Sutures removed
  o Xray will generally be taken
  o Placed into a lace up ankle brace or walking boot depending on findings at surgery and whether other procedures were performed.
  o May start putting weight on ankle as you feel comfortable
  o Start physical therapy if wound doing well for motion, early strength and balance

• 6 weeks
  o Second postoperative visit
  o Placed into a Lace up ankle brace if not already in one. Use at all times except shower/sleep
  o Advance physical therapy

• 8-12 Weeks
  o Continue PT
  o Return to sporting activities is dependent on progress with physical therapy