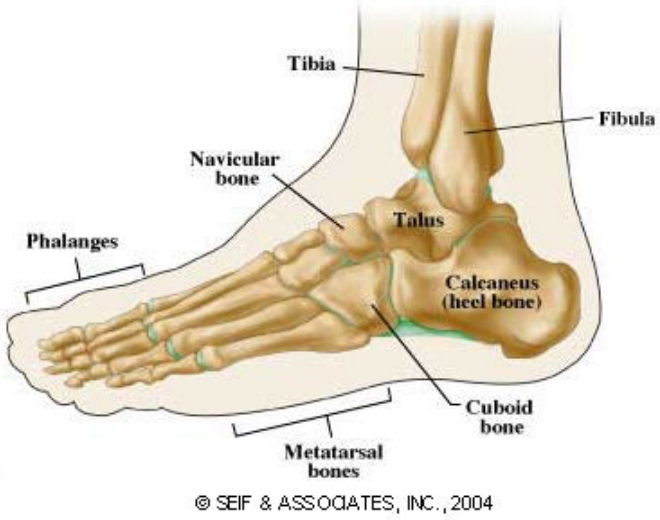
Ankle Arthroscopy

Arthroscopy is a surgical procedure for looking into the ankle joint. The ankle is the joint between the large bones of your lower leg (*tibia* and *fibula*) and the largest bone of the foot (*talus*). Arthroscopy is a surgical technique which uses a small cut by the surgeon (*incisions*) to insert a small telescope like instrument (*arthroscope*) and other tools into the ankle joint. This allows the surgeon to look directly at the problem and repair it. This is most often performed as a same day surgery. This means you will not have to stay in the hospital overnight. Recovery from this surgery is much faster than having an open procedure.



BEFORE SURGERY

- Tell your surgeon about any medicine that you are taking. You may have to stop taking some of them because they may increase the risk of bleeding.
- Do not eat or drink after midnight, or as instructed. Take medicines as your physician instructs. You may have lab tests the morning of surgery.
- You should be present one hour prior to your procedure or as suggested. Check in at the admissions desk to fill out necessary forms if not preregistered. There may be consent forms to sign prior to the procedure. Should friends or family accompany you, there is a waiting area available for them while you are having your procedure.

LET YOUR CAREGIVER KNOW ABOUT THE FOLLOWING:

- Allergies
- Medicines taken including herbs, eye drops, over the counter medicines, and creams
- Use of steroids (by mouth or creams)
- Previous problems with anesthetics
- Family history of anesthetic problems
- Possibility of pregnancy, if this applies
- History of blood clots (*thrombophlebitis*)
- History of bleeding or blood problems
- Previous surgery
- Other health problems

RISKS AND COMPLICATIONS

This is usually a very safe surgery. Possible complications include damage to nerves or blood vessels, excess bleeding, blood clots, the possibility of infection, and rarely, instrument failure.

PROCEDURE

You may have a general anesthetic to make you sleep during the procedure, or a local anesthetic in which just the part being worked on is numb. Your surgeon, anesthesiologist or anesthetist will discuss these options with you. Some of the most commonly encountered problems in the ankle joint are loose pieces which can be removed, bone spurs which can be removed, and OCD (osteochondritis dissecans), where a piece of bone separates because of injury to its blood supply. In the case of OCD, the piece of bone may be removed or secured back in place. This may require an open procedure.

AFTER YOUR PROCEDURE

- After surgery, you will be taken to the recovery area where a nurse will watch and check your progress. Once you are awake, stable, and taking fluids well, barring other problems, you will be allowed to go home.
- Once home, an ice pack applied to your operative site for twenty minutes, three to four times per day, for two to three days, may help with discomfort and keep the swelling down.
- Use medicine as prescribed.

- Do range of motion with ankle as directed.
- Keep your ankle elevated and wrapped to keep swelling down and to decrease pain. This also speeds healing.
- You may be able to bear weight as soon as you are comfortable. If an open procedure and fixation of an OCD was done, it may be necessary to have a cast or removable boot for several weeks with weight bearing as directed.
- Remove the dressings and shower as directed by your surgeon.

REHABILITATION

- Ankles are often swollen, stiff and painful following surgery. If physical therapy and exercises are prescribed by your surgeon, follow them carefully.
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You notice redness, swelling, or increasing pain in the wound or joint.
- There is pus *(purulent drainage*) coming from wound.
- An unexplained oral temperature above 101° F (38.3° C) develops.
- A foul smell is coming from the wound or dressing.
- There is a breaking open of the *wound* (edges not staying together) after sutures or tape have been removed.
- There is progressive numbness of the foot or toes.

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