



## Ankle Fusion for Advanced Ankle Arthritis

Ankle fusion creates a stiff pain free joint by joining the tibia and talus bones together. It is the most reliable option in the treatment of ankle arthritis. It is the best option for:

- Younger patients
- Patients with high physical demands
- Ankle deformity or ligament insufficiency
- Patients with multiple medical problems
- Very stiff ankle joints

There are 2 techniques.

- Arthroscopic fusion through smaller incisions in most cases. The joint is compressed together with 2 screws.
- Open fusion when there is significant deformity. This is performed through an incision over the front of the ankle and the joint is compressed with plates and screws.

Once fused there is no ankle motion but the remaining joints of the foot compensate to provide up to 30% of normal motion.

Fusion is successful in 90% of cases

### **What does the rehabilitation involve?**

- 2 nights in hospital.
- 2 weeks elevation of the foot in a cast non weightbearing
- 4 weeks in a boot non weightbearing
- 6 weeks in a boot progressively weightbearing
- By 3 months managing most daily activities
- By 6 months back to most recreational activities.
- Swelling resolves at 6-9 months
- 1 year for final result



### **How long will I be off work?**

This is dependent upon your occupation

- Seated job 4-6weeks
- Standing job 12 weeks
- Heavy lifting job 16 weeks

### **When can I drive?**

If your right ankle is fused you cannot drive for 3 months

If your left ankle is fused you may drive an automatic after 2 weeks, but cannot drive a manual for 3 months

### **What are the risks of the procedure?**

General risks

- Infection and wound problems
- Nerve injury and scar sensitivity
- Blood clots to the leg
- Anaesthetic problems

Specific to ankle fusion

- Non union(bones not joining) 3- 10%
- Mal - alignment of fusion
- Development of arthritis in adjacent joints which may require treatment
- Metalware irritation requiring removal

### **Will I have a limp?**

Some patients do have a limp afterwards. This can be improved with a rocker sole shoe modification.

### **Can I wear high heels?**

It is not possible to wear a shoe with a more than a small heel

### **Can I run?**

It is not possible to run after a fusion.

This information is an overview of the ankle fusion and is not all inclusive.

If you have any questions regarding this please contact Mr. Curry 's rooms on **(03) 9928 6560.**