

# Ankle Arthroscopy

An information guide



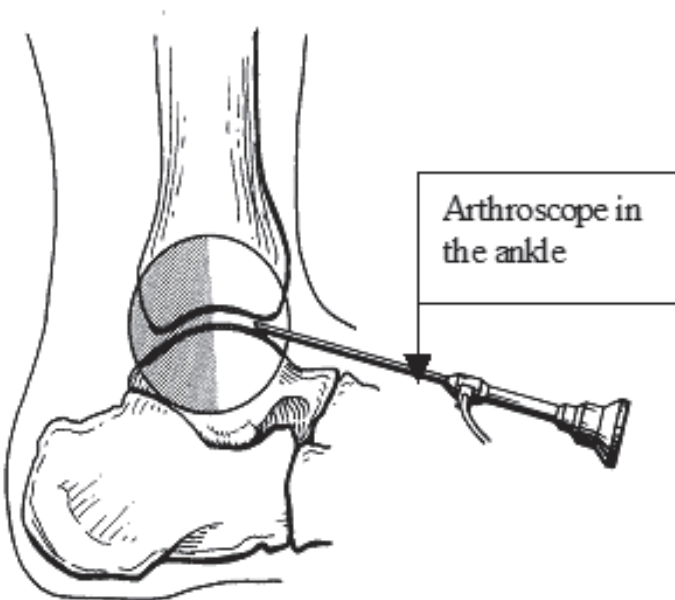
# Ankle Arthroscopy

## What is an arthroscopy?

An arthroscopy is an examination of the inside of a joint, using an arthroscope.

The arthroscope is a small telescope that is inserted into the joint using two small incisions. A camera is attached to the arthroscope, allowing the surgeon to inspect the inside of the ankle joint using direct vision.

A diagnosis can then be made, and treated using the arthroscope.



## **Why do i need an arthroscopy?**

An ankle arthroscopy is performed for a variety of conditions affecting the ankle.

The symptoms treated are:

- Pain
- Weakness or instability in the ankle
- Swelling

A number of different soft tissue and bony conditions can be treated arthroscopically, for example, the removal of bony spurs, loose bone fragments or shaving of soft tissue inflammation (Synovitis) or scar tissue.

## **What does the operation involve?**

The operation is done under general anaesthetic as a day case.

The operation itself involves making two small incisions over the ankle joint and inserting a probe with a camera to look at the inside of the joint and to carry any necessary surgery.

## **What should I expect after surgery?**

Following the procedure, a padded bandage will be applied.

You will usually be advised to remove the bandage about 48 hours following surgery, leaving the dry dressing over the wound intact.

Your wound dressing will be changed and stitches removed in clinic about 14 days following procedure.

It is common for the joint to become inflamed following the arthroscopy. It is advisable to elevate the leg and limit the amount of walking for two weeks following the procedure, then gradually increase as you become more able.

After some procedures, a cast or boot may be applied to rest the ankle for 2 to 6 weeks following surgery and crutches may be required.

Gently mobilise the ankle as soon as you are able. This prevents stiffness and strengthens muscles. A physiotherapist will assess walking and explain exercises that are necessary to aid recovery.

An outpatient physiotherapy appointment will be made for you.

An ice pack wrapped in a damp towel should be applied to the ankle area to help reduce swelling and pain. Ice packs may be applied for 15 to 20 minutes, 4 times a day with at least two hours between applications.

## **When can I drive?**

Patients who have had the left ankle operated on will be able to drive an automatic car at around two weeks. Those who have had an operation on the right side will be able to drive after about 2 to 6 weeks depending on the actual surgery performed.

It is important to be able to perform an emergency stop. You **MUST** notify your insurance company of the procedure that has been undertaken to ensure that your cover is valid.

## **When can I play sports?**

Your return to sport will depend on the damage to your ankle which led you to have the arthroscopy in the first place and on the necessary treatment.

Gentle activity can often be resumed approximately six weeks after an arthroscopy. Competitive sport such as football, rugby or squash may take longer but it also depends on the type of surgery carried out.

## **What are the risks involved?**

Complications can occur after any operation. Fortunately, these are quite rare and usually treatable. If you have any concerns please notify your doctor or a health care professional as soon as possible.

Complications following ankle arthroscopy include:

- Pain
- Stiffness
- Swelling
- Infection
- Nerve Injury (numbness over parts of the foot)
- Deep vein thrombosis ( blood clot in the veins of the legs)
- Failure to relieve symptoms
- Reoccurrence of symptoms

You are advised **not to fly** after surgery for about 6 weeks to reduce the risks of deep vein thrombosis.

## **If you need any further information**

Please inform staff of any concerns or questions you may have. We will do our best to answer your queries quickly.



**If English is not your first language and you need help, please contact the Interpretation and Translation Service**

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