

Encouraging Results Seen with Early Ambulation After First Metatarsophalangeal Joint Fusion

Physical Therapy in Merrimack Valley for Foot

Pain and stiffness of the first metatarsophalangeal joint (the "big toe" joint where it meets the foot) is fairly common after surgery, or cerebral palsy, to name a few. To reduce the pain and disability, surgeons fuse the joint with a procedure called screws, even metal plates to stabilize the bones. Whatever technique they use for the surgery, care after the surgery will vary greatly.

There are reports surgeons requesting their patients get up walking, with early weight-bearing, usually wearing a special brace or cast. This is done to encourage early ambulation after surgery using compression screws and locking plates. The authors of this article describe two patients who had this type of fusion using compression screws and locking plates. The authors of this article describe two patients who had this type of fusion using compression screws and locking plates.

The first patient, a 59-year-old female had undergone a bunionectomy earlier but has since experienced severe pain to the point of being unable to walk. A surgeon performed the arthrodesis using a compression screw and locking plate and the patient began walking immediately. Within a week, the patient was able to wear regular shoes and had no complaints of pain while walking.

The second patient, a 53-year-old male was complaining of pain in the toe joint, which on an x-ray showed degenerative changes. He had undergone a bunionectomy earlier but had pain again. He had been considering having surgery to relieve the pain and discomfort. The surgeon used the compression screw and locking plate, as with the first patient. At follow-up, eight weeks later, the patient was wearing normal shoes and reported that he had no pain.

The locking plate used by the surgeons has advantages over the standard plates that were being used. The locking plate allows for early ambulation, which has many benefits that reduce the risks of complications associated with surgery, such as blood clots and infections.

In conclusion, the authors found that using the compression screws and locking plates, and encouraging early ambulation, resulted in good outcomes for both patients.

Reference: Robert M. Greenhagen, DPM, et al. Immediate Ambulation after a First Metatarsophalangeal Joint Fusion. *Journal of Foot and Ankle Surgery*. April 2010. Vol. 3. No. 4.