

REMOVAL OF HARDWARE

What is the problem?

Patients often need screws, plates, nails or wires removed after a period of time to improve function, reduce irritation or pain and clear infection. Hardware removal involves exposing the hardware to be removed and reconstituting the surrounding tissues.

What's involved?

Surgery to remove hardware includes:

- general anaesthetic, intravenous antibiotics
- incision over the affected area
- identification of hardware
- removal of hardware with appropriate equipment
- Irrigation of wound if required
- wound closure with stiches/sutures
- infiltration with local anaesthetic

What's the worst thing(s) that can happen with surgery?

All surgical procedures carry some risk. The risk of complications with this surgery is low. Some of the risks include:

- Infection
- Problems with wound healing
- Joint stiffness
- Retained metal due to breakage
- Periprosthetic fracture
- Nerve injury causing numbness, tingling and/or pins and needles
- Deep venous thrombosis/pulmonary embolism. (The risk of DVT increases with smoking, the oral contraceptive pill, hormone replacement therapy, immobility and obesity)
- Anaesthetic complications
- Drug allergy
- Ongoing pain

What can I expect after surgery?

Rest

- You will have a boot/shoe on your leg/foot. Keep foot elevated as much as possible, especially for initial 72 hours. Keep dressings dry and intact until post operative appointment.
- Mobilise short distances as pain allows, aim to remain in your own home for the first few weeks limiting long periods of standing or mobilising
- Bear weight as tolerated unless instructed otherwise

Pain

- Pain relief may be required for up to 2 weeks; depending on your other medications this may include:
 - Regular paracetamol, anti-inflammatory drugs and break through opiate type medications

Driving

- Any surgery performed on the right foot or both feet will mean no driving for a minimum of 2 weeks
- If surgery was performed on the left foot then driving in an automatic is possible, but Dr Phegan would recommend waiting a minimum of two weeks before attempting to drive

Driving any vehicle with a cast or boot is potentially hazardous and you should consider this before getting behind the wheel

Follow up

- Keep all dressings dry and in tact for the first two weeks
- Removal of stitches/sutures typically occurs at an appointment with Dr Phegan and his in-house therapists at 10-14 days at first post operative appointment. Very occasionally some sutures need to stay in for longer
- Your appointment will be booked by Dr Phegan and a confirmatory SMS will be sent informing you of the time and date for follow up

Typical milestones

- 2 weeks: Wound review and removal of sutures, change from cast to boot, commence rehabilitation
- 2-6 weeks: regular physiotherapy to increase range and weight bearing as tolerated
- 6weeks to 3 months: work on swelling reduction, scar massage and mobility
- Full recovery 3 months

Every patient's recovery is individual and depends on the severity of the injury and the complexity of the surgery

ANY PROBLEMS

During office hours contact Dr Phegan's office on (07) 56711120 or email info@drphegan.com

After hours please contact the hospital where your surgery was performed or attend your local GP