



Ankle Arthroscopy

What is Ankle Arthroscopy?

Ankle arthroscopy is a minimally invasive surgical procedure used to diagnose and treat a variety of ankle conditions. During the procedure, a surgeon inserts a small camera, known as an arthroscope, into the ankle joint through tiny incisions. This allows them to view the joint on a monitor and perform necessary interventions using specialized surgical instruments.

Why is Ankle Arthroscopy Performed?

Ankle arthroscopy is recommended when conservative treatments fail to alleviate symptoms. Some common reasons for undergoing ankle arthroscopy include:

- Chronic ankle pain or swelling that does not improve with nonsurgical methods
- Repeated ankle sprains causing instability
- Removal of bone spurs or loose bodies within the joint
- Cartilage damage resulting from injury or arthritis
- Evaluation and repair of ligament injuries
- Treatment of joint infections

Before the Surgery

Before undergoing ankle arthroscopy, you will meet with your surgeon to discuss your

medical history, current medications, and any allergies. Preoperative tests, such as X-rays or MRIs, may be ordered to assess the condition of your ankle. You will also receive instructions regarding fasting prior to surgery and which medications to stop or continue.

During the Surgery

Ankle arthroscopy is typically performed under regional anaesthesia or general anaesthesia depending on the complexity of the procedure.

- The surgeon makes small incisions around your ankle joint.
- The arthroscope is inserted into one incision to provide a clear view of the joint interior.
- Specialized instruments are introduced through other incisions to perform the necessary repairs or treatments.
- The joint is often filled with sterile fluid to expand the area and improve visibility.

The procedure usually lasts between 30 minutes to an hour, depending on the extent of the intervention.

After the Surgery

Post-surgery, you will be taken to a recovery room where medical staff will monitor your vital signs and ensure you are comfortable. You may experience mild swelling, discomfort, or stiffness around the ankle, which is normal and should improve within a few days.

Potential Risks and Complications

Ankle arthroscopy is considered safe, but as with any surgical procedure, there are potential risks, including:

- Infection in the surgical site or joint
- Bleeding or blood clots
- Damage to surrounding nerves or blood vessels
- Persistent pain or stiffness in the ankle
- Reaction to anaesthesia
- Complications related to specific treatments performed during the procedure

Your surgeon will discuss these risks with you and explain measures taken to minimize them.

Recovery and Rehabilitation

Immediate Recovery

After ankle arthroscopy, most patients can return home the same day. You will receive instructions regarding wound care, medications for pain management, and activities to avoid.

Rehabilitation

Recovery from ankle arthroscopy often involves physical therapy to restore strength, range of motion, and stability to the joint. Your rehabilitation program may include:

- Stretching exercises to improve flexibility
- Strength-building activities to support the ankle
- Balance and proprioception exercises to prevent future injuries

- Gradual progression to weight-bearing activities

The timeline for recovery varies depending on the complexity of the surgery and the individual's overall health, but most patients can resume normal activities within 4–6 weeks.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is ankle arthroscopy painful?

During the procedure, anaesthesia ensures that you do not feel pain. Post-surgery discomfort is typically mild and can be managed with prescribed painkillers.

Will I need crutches after the surgery?

In many cases, crutches are recommended for the first few days to avoid putting weight on the affected ankle. Your surgeon will advise you based on your specific situation.

When can I return to work or sports?

This depends on your recovery progress and the demands of your job or sport. Desk jobs may be resumed within a few days, while physically demanding activities may require several weeks or months.

Conclusion

Ankle arthroscopy is an effective and minimally invasive option for diagnosing and treating various ankle conditions. With proper care and rehabilitation, most patients achieve significant relief and return to their normal activities. If you have persistent ankle pain or other symptoms, consult your doctor to determine whether this procedure is suitable for you.