

Ankle arthroscopy

What is ankle arthroscopy?

Ankle arthroscopy is “Key Hole Surgery” of the ankle. In this operation your surgeon will look inside the ankle joint via keyholes made on the skin.

Why is ankle arthroscopy done?

It is offered to patients who have ankle joint problems that would benefit from key hole surgery. Indications for ankle arthroscopy are:

- Impingement (Clearing soft tissue or bone causing pain/impeding movements)
- Septic joint (Infection of ankle joint)
- Osteochondral Lesions (Damaged cartilage)
- Ankle Instability (Giving way of ankle)
- Loose bodies
- Fracture reduction
- Arthritis (To clear debris or fuse the joint)

What does the procedure involve?

Arthroscopy is performed as a day case procedure. It can be done either under a general or a spinal anaesthesia. Tourniquet (similar to a blood pressure cuff) is placed around thigh and this helps the surgeon to get a clear view of the inside of the ankle joint. Two small cuts (incisions) are made at the front or back of the ankle. A camera (the arthroscope) is inserted through one incision to visualise the joint. The other incision is used to insert the instruments required to treat the problem.

What is the post-operative recovery?

You will have a bulky dressing on the ankle. This is to be left as it is for 2 weeks. In the first few days, elevation of the foot is recommended to reduce the swelling. You may require oral pain killer medications in the first few days. Weight bearing status will be discussed with you by your surgeon. In some patients physiotherapy input may be needed. You will be advised not to drive a manual car for 2 weeks. If you have had operation on the left ankle, an automatic car may be driven after a few days.

What are the complications of ankle arthroscopy?

Ankle arthroscopy is a very safe procedure. A small percentage of patients may develop the below mentioned complications:

- Infection
- Clots
- Swelling
- Numbness/Nerve damage
- Stiffness
- Chronic pain syndrome