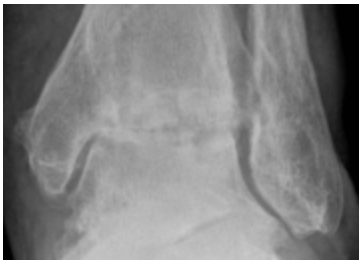
Ankle Arthritis

While most individuals are aware of the "wear and tear" arthritis common in the hip and knee, arthritis in the ankle is less commonly spoken about. Interestingly, the ankle has about 1/3 the surface area of the knee, yet has to withstand loads as high and sometimes higher than the knee, yet it doesn't wear out as easily as the knee. While good old fashion osteoarthritis of the ankle does occur, the great majority of ankle arthritis is post-traumatic, that is, it occurs sometime after an injury to the ankle. It is common that patients with ankle arthritis have associated arthritis or deformity to the joints near the ankle resulting from their injuries. Because of these factors, many ankle arthritis patients are younger than their knee and hip arthritis counterparts.



Ankle

The diagnosis of ankle arthritis is confirmed with standing x-rays of the ankle. The great majority of times no additional imaging studies are required, unless they are needed to evaluate nearby joints.

Initial treatment of arthritis of the ankle is similar to treatment of arthritis in other joints:

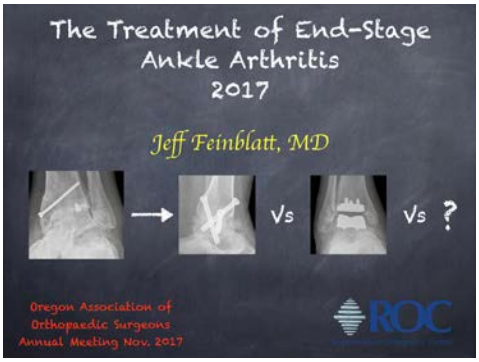
-Over the counter anti-inflammatories such as Ibuprofen or Naproxen
-Off loading the joint using a brace, crutch, or cane
-Off loading the joint through weight loss if appropriate

If symptoms persist, additional non-surgical options include:

-Custom bracing
-Steroid injections

In the appropriate patient who continues to have symptoms despite the above treatment, surgical options can provide dramatic pain relief, deformity correction, and improved mobility. The appropriate procedure depends on many factors. Options include:

-Ankle replacement (metallic or biologic)
-Ankle fusion
-Ankle distraction arthroplasty
-Osteotomies (cutting the bone) to realign the joint



I was asked to speak as an expert on this topic at Oregon's Annual meeting of Orthopedic Surgeons

Contact us:

If you have questions regarding ankle or foot pain, contact us for an appointment.