

# Treating Your Ankle Arthritis

with the  
**INFINITY™**  
Total Ankle System

Every patient is different, and individual results will vary. There are risks and recovery times associated with surgery. Consult your doctor to determine if ankle replacement surgery is right for you.

in association with:



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# Glossary

**Ankle Instability** – Chronic, repetitive sprains of the ankle. This can be due to an injury that never healed properly but can also be due to weak ankle ligaments or a heel that tilts inward (varus heel).

**Ankle Joint** – The joint between the foot and the lower leg. It allows the foot to dorsiflex (move upward) and plantarflex (move downward). It is made up of the two bones of the lower leg (tibia & fibula) and the ankle bone (talus). There are ligaments that hold the joint together on the inside (deltoid) and outside (lateral ankle ligament complex).

**Arthritis** – Arthritis typically refers to the wearing away of joint surfaces. Arthritis falls into one of three categories: Osteoarthritis is primary arthritis of the joint and may be related to family history. Traumatic arthritis is arthritis that develops after injury to a joint. Inflammatory arthritis occurs when a disease affecting the patient causes the cartilage to wear away. Treatment is dependent on the cause and extent of the arthritis and may include medication, bracing, physical therapy or surgery.

**Calcaneus** – The heel bone. Two joints are present: the subtalar joint which allows motion with the talus (ankle) bone which allows inversion and eversion of the foot with the leg; and the calcaneocuboid joint has a complicated biomechanical function that controls flexibility of the foot and controls the arch of the foot. The Achilles tendon attaches to the back of the calcaneus, and the plantar fascia also attaches to the bottom of the calcaneus.

**Cartilage** – Cartilage is a living tissue that lines our joints. It is a matrix of proteins and collagen that is tough, absorbs shock and is very smooth. Healthy cartilage can, and often does, last our whole life without problems. Disease of the cartilage or trauma can cause the cartilage cells to die. Unlike most tissues in our body, joint cartilage cells do not reproduce themselves once our skeletons are fully grown.

**Fibula** – The most prominent bone on the outer side of the ankle that also extends to the knee.

**Inflammatory arthritis** – Inflammatory arthritis occurs when a disease affecting the patient causes the cartilage to die off. Treatment is dependent on the cause and extent of the arthritis and may entail medication, bracing or surgery.

**Lateral malleolus** – The end of the fibula, the most prominent bone on the outside of the ankle.

**Ligament** – A band of tissue that connects one bone to another, typically to support a joint. Ligaments are made primarily of collagen. Injury to a ligament is referred to as a sprain.

**Medial malleolus** – The most prominent bone on the inner side of the ankle.

**Osteoarthritis** – Osteoarthritis is primary arthritis of the joint and may be related to family history.

**Rheumatoid arthritis** – One of the inflammatory arthritis diseases. This is an autoimmune disorder where the patient's immune system malfunctions and attacks the cartilage and tendons.

**Sprain** – An injury causing tearing of a ligament. Sprains vary in severity and can range from a partial tearing of the ligament to a complete rupture.

**Sprained ankle** – A rupture of one or more of the ligaments that surround the ankle.

**Talus** – The ankle bone. This bone sits within the ankle "Mortise" or hinge which is made up of the two leg bones, the tibia and fibula. Three joints are present: the ankle, which allows the up and down motion of

the foot with the leg; the subtalar joint which allows “inversion” and “eversion” of the foot with the leg; and the talonavicular joint which has a complicated biomechanical function that controls flexibility of the foot and the arch of the foot. The talus has no muscular attachments and is mostly covered with cartilage, which makes injuries to the talus difficult to heal.

**Tendon** – A tendon is a structure in the body that connects muscle to bone. As the muscle contracts, it pulls on the tendon which moves the bone. Tendons are made mostly of collagen. Inflammation of a tendon is called tendonitis. Tendons can tear or rupture if they are pulled too hard by the muscle, or if they degenerate.

**Tendonitis** – Inflammation of a tendon. Most cases of tendonitis are caused by some type of injury, overuse or a mechanical abnormality in the foot or ankle. Treatment depends on the specific tendon involved, the extent of involvement and the length of time the symptoms have been present.

**Tibia** (shinbone) – The large bone of the leg that extends from the knee to the ankle.

**Tibialis anterior tendon** – The function of the tibialis anterior is to move the ankle upwards. It stabilizes the foot in the latter part of the stance phase of gait and extends the foot at the beginning and middle portions of the swing phase of gait.

**Valgus** – Tilted “outward” or away from the midline of the body.

**Varus** – Tilted “inward” or towards the midline of the body.

# Anatomy of the Ankle

The human ankle is a joint that acts much like a hinge. The joint is formed by the union of three bones. The ankle bone is the **talus**. The top of the talus fits inside a socket that is formed by the lower end of the **tibia**, often called the shinbone, and the **fibula**, the small bone of the lower leg. The bottom of the talus sits on the heel bone, called the calcaneus. As one of the most flexible, free-moving joints in the body, the normal ankle can move forwards, from side-to-side, and twist.

Like other free-moving joints, the ankle contains **cartilage** which absorbs shock. It is held together with **ligaments** – straps of tough tissue, which help prevent the joint from dislocating. Full function of the ankle joint depends on the successful coordination of many interrelated parts including bones, muscles, tendons, ligaments, and nerves. In patients with arthritis, one of the most common reasons for ankle replacement surgery, the cartilage in the joint has worn down, resulting in bone-on-bone contact, causing pain and limited activity.



Tibia

Fibula

Talus



# Diseases of the Ankle

## **What Is Osteoarthritis?**

Osteoarthritis, also known as degenerative arthritis, is the most common joint disorder, which is due to aging and wear and tear on a joint.

## **What Is Rheumatoid Arthritis?**

Rheumatoid arthritis occurs when the body's own immune system attacks the synovial lining of the joints, just as it would a foreign bacteria. Synovial fluid is a clear, smooth, oil-like lubricating liquid that makes it easier for the joints to move.

## **What Is Tarsal Tunnel Syndrome?**

Tarsal Tunnel Syndrome is the result of nerve compression in the ankle as the sensory nerve passes under the tarsal tunnel and the tunnel is irritated by pressure. The result is numbness and tingling in the foot and ankle.

## **What Is Ankle Injury?**

Ankle injury occurs when there is trauma to the joint. Symptoms include swelling, pain, weakness and difficulty walking. These injuries can significantly affect your mobility.

# What is the INFINITY Total Ankle System?

The INFINITY Total Ankle System consists of a highly polished metal talar dome, a titanium alloy tibial tray, and an ultra-high molecular weight polyethylene insert (UHMWPE). All components are available in varying sizes to best match your anatomy.



## **INFINITY Tibial Tray**

The tray component covers the bottom (distal end) of the shinbone (tibia) to provide a large footprint for fixation and minimize implant subsidence. The tray component is attached to your shinbone (tibia) with bone cement.

## **INFINITY UHMWPE Insert**

The polyethylene insert acts as the articulating surface of the distal shinbone (tibia). The insert glides along the contours of the ankle (talar) component. The INFINITY prosthesis offers a variety of poly thicknesses.

## **INFINITY Talar Dome**

The talar dome replaces the proximal (top) of the talus (ankle) bone. The talar dome acts as the surface upon which the insert glides. The talar component is attached to your ankle (talus) with bone cement.

# Things You Should Know

## **What is the purpose of the INFINITY Total Ankle System? (Indications for use)**

The INFINITY Total Ankle is intended to give a patient limited mobility by reducing pain, restoring alignment and replacing the flexion and extension movement in the ankle joint.

The INFINITY Total Ankle is indicated for patients with ankle joints damaged by severe rheumatoid, post-traumatic, or degenerative arthritis.

**CAUTION:** The ankle prosthesis is intended for cement use only.

## **When should the INFINITY Total Ankle not be used? (Contraindications)**

You should not receive the INFINITY Total Ankle if:

- You have an infection of the body or bone
- Excessive bone loss at the ankle joint;
- Steroid use;
- Infection at the ankle site or infections at distant sites that could migrate to the ankle;
- Sepsis;
- Muscular atrophy;
- Dementia;
- Poor blood supply in the ankle joint;
- Skeletally immature patients (patient is less than 21 years of age at the time of surgery);
- Cases where there is inadequate neuromuscular status, poor bone stock, poor skin coverage around the joint which would make the procedure unjustifiable;
- Neuropathic joints;
- Hepatitis or HIV infection;
- Excessive loads as caused by activity or patient weight;
- Female of childbearing age, for whom a negative pregnancy test is not obtained; and,
- Neurological or musculoskeletal disease that may adversely affect gait or weight bearing.



# What Are the Alternatives?

There are both surgical and non-surgical alternatives to ankle replacement surgery. First line treatments for arthritis of the ankle are non-surgical methods. Several of the non-surgical methods provide relief because they limit motion, thus decreasing the irritation of the arthritic joint. One such method is the use of **shoe inserts** (orthotics), such as pads and arch supports. The use of an **ankle brace** or a **cane** can also help to take pressure and stress off the arthritic joint. An ankle-foot **orthosis** (AFO), or a custom-made shoe with a stiff sole and a rocker bottom, can also work by decreasing motion thru the ankle joint. Direct injection of **medication** into the arthritic joint can give up to several months of pain relief. It is important to note that **weight control** is also an important method of decreasing the stress on the ankle. Although none of these treatments can reverse or cure the deteriorated cartilage, they can provide improved function with decreased pain.

If the non-surgical treatments don't adequately reduce your pain, surgical options can be pursued. The specific surgery that is right for you depends on the extent and pattern of cartilage damage and level of pain associated with the ankle. Alternatives to ankle

replacement include: debridement, allograft (cadaver) arthroplasty, distraction arthroplasty, and arthrodesis (fusion).

A **debridement** is essentially "cleaning up the ankle joint" and can be done arthroscopically or through open techniques. This procedure involves the removal of inflamed synovial tissue (joint lining), loose cartilage fragments and osteophytes (bone spurs). In ankles that still have a reasonable amount of normal cartilage remaining, this method can give relief of pain for several months to years. Another surgical procedure is an **allograft**, where cadaver donated cartilage and bone can be transplanted into your ankle in order to replace focal areas of damaged cartilage. **Distraction arthroplasty** typically involves a debridement of the ankle followed by application of a wire frame thru the bones above and below the ankle. This apparatus holds the ankle stiff and slightly separated, in order to allow some cartilage healing to occur. For ankles that have diffuse cartilage loss, **arthrodesis** (fusion) is a procedure where your orthopaedic surgeon takes out the remaining cartilage and uses screws and other metal "hardware" to stabilize the joint to allow the bone to heal together and eliminate motion and pain.



# What Are the Benefits?

Your surgeon has decided that you will benefit from ankle replacement surgery. The benefits may include the relief of pain and return of function to the ankle. When thinking about the benefits of the INFINITY Total Ankle System, you should compare the possible risks and benefits of the INFINITY Total Ankle System to the risks and benefits of ankle fusion.

## **Total Ankle Replacement Versus Ankle Fusion**

The INFINITY Total Ankle System is an ankle replacement device. With an ankle replacement device, the surgeon covers your distal tibia with a metal tibial tray, your talus with a metal talar dome, and a poly block is placed in between both components. With an ankle fusion an orthopedic

surgeon or doctor of podiatric medicine determines which type of fixation is most appropriate for each patient. In external fixation, surgical pins are fixed inside the leg and ankle bones to keep the bones in place, and an outer metal rod and pins hold the bones in place until they heal. More commonly, in an internal fixation approach, the cartilage at the ankle joint is removed, and the ankle and leg bones are compressed with internal plates and screws so that the bones fuse.



*Traditional  
TTC Fusion*



# What Are the Risks?

The risks and complications associated with the INFINITY Total Ankle System include:

- Excessive bleeding
- Damage of blood vessels may occur due to surgery
- Delayed wound healing
- Sudden drop in blood pressure during surgery due to the use of bone cement or anesthesia
- Temporary or permanent nerve damage
- Allergic reaction due to anesthesia, medication, or device material
- Allergic reaction to the implant's materials. As the parts rub against each other, metal ions are released into the body, which may cause an allergy. There are no known medical consequences of these ions at this time, however, studies are ongoing
- Infection, which can lead to removal of the device
- Device loosening from surrounding bone
- Increased ankle pain and/or reduced function
- Hardening of the tissue (calcifications) or bony points around the devices
- Device related noise such as, clicking popping, squeaking or grinding
- Overuse of the device from too much weight or activity may cause the device to fail prematurely
- Premature wear or breakage of the implant
- Bone breakage due to osteoporosis or accidents (trauma)
- Damage to the bones and tissue (tissue necrosis, pseudotumor) near the ankle joint, including loss of the surrounding bone (osteolysis) or staining of the ankle joint due to wearing of the metal parts overtime
- Pseudotumor; and
- Chronic inflammation response due to metal sensitivity (Aseptic Lymphocyte Dominant Vasculitis Associated Lesion – AVAL)

# Frequently Asked Questions

## How is total ankle replacement surgery performed?

The INFINITY Total Ankle System requires a specific training certification your surgeon must take before he/she can begin using INFINITY.



- In the operating room, EKG electrodes will be placed on your chest and side to monitor your heart rhythm during surgery.
- The anesthesiologist will then inject medication through your IV line to put you to sleep (general anesthesia) or block feeling from the waist down (spinal anesthesia).
- Your surgeon will use a tourniquet to control bleeding in the wound.
- Your surgeon will make a surgical cut in the front of your ankle to expose the ankle joint. Your surgeon will then gently push the tendons, nerves, and blood vessels to the side.
- Your surgeon will remove the damaged bone and reshape the bones that remain in place (tibia and talus).
- The parts of the new artificial joint are then attached to the cut bony surfaces. A special glue/bone cement is used to hold them in place.
- After putting the tendons back into place, the surgeon closes the wound with sutures (stitches). You may need to wear a brace for a while to keep the ankle from moving.

## What are some symptoms that would prompt a call to your surgeon after your operation?

- Redness, swelling, or drainage from around the incision
- An unexplained fever (temperature over 100 degrees Fahrenheit or 38 degrees Centigrade) or chills that last more than a day
- Severe ankle pain that is not relieved by your pain medicine



**WARNING:** Always follow your surgeon's directions for activity limitations. Failure to do so may result in damage to your joint and may lead to device failure.

**WARNING:** Device failure may require additional surgery to remove the device (revision surgery).

You can ask your doctor about total ankle replacement, or visit: [www.wright.com](http://www.wright.com) for more information.