



Position Statement: Total Ankle Replacement Surgery

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The American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons (ACFAS) is a professional society of more than 7,100 foot and ankle surgeons. Founded in 1942, ACFAS seeks to promote the art and science of foot, ankle, and related lower extremity surgery, address the concerns of foot and ankle surgeons, advance and improve standards of education and surgical skill, and advance and advocate for the highest standards of patient care and safety.

ACFAS member physicians are doctors of podiatric medicine who are graduates of accredited U.S. podiatric medical schools. ACFAS members have completed surgical residency programs of up to four years, and all Fellows of the College are certified by the American Board of Foot and Ankle Surgery (the surgical board of foot and ankle surgeons recognized by the Joint Committee on the Recognition of Specialty Boards). Many have additional fellowship training in various aspects of foot, ankle, and lower extremity surgery, including total ankle replacement.

End stage arthritis of the ankle is a leading cause of chronic disability in North America.(1) Historically, the prevailing option for patients with painful end-stage ankle arthritis has been ankle fusion.(2) While ankle fusion can successfully relieve the pain within the joint, the resulting range of motion restriction can shift motion stresses to the adjacent joints, which in time also become arthritic.(3) In more recent years, total ankle replacement has been refined and now has become a viable option to ankle fusion and has high patient acceptance. In a survey of the world literature on ankle fusion versus ankle replacement surgery, the safety profile of the two procedures are comparable. (4)

Not every patient with end-stage arthritis of the ankle is a sound candidate for ankle replacement. A surgeon experienced in total ankle surgery can make this determination through careful history and physical evaluation. (5) As with any total joint replacement, patients who are candidates for this procedure should be made aware of alternative treatments and expected outcomes. Furthermore, adjunctive procedures are often necessary as part of the surgical plan to ensure proper device function. (6)

In the United States, total ankle replacement surgery is currently a safe and effective treatment option for select patients with end stage ankle arthritis. Studies have shown total ankle replacement surgery improves patient function, reduces pain, and promotes improved quality of life. (7, 8)

Patients should consider consulting with a surgeon who is board certified or board qualified in foot and ankle surgery with experience and training in total ankle replacement when considering this procedure.



References

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