

## Checking the Blood Flow in Your Leg

Good **blood flow** is important for recovery after surgery on your leg. These instructions will teach you how to check the blood flow in your leg by examining your foot and performing a capillary refill test. Follow the instructions below.

### Examining Your Foot

#### Step 1

Look at your foot and toes on the leg recovering from the surgical procedure.

- A** Compare your feet.  
Do you see any differences?



- B** Your foot and toes on the surgical side should feel warm, be normal in color and have little to no swelling. These signs mean you have good blood flow in your leg.



- C** If your foot looks red or blue, feels cool, or has a lot of swelling, your leg may have poor blood flow.

#### Step 2

Does your foot feel numb or tingly? A feeling of numbness and tingling may also be a sign of poor blood flow.



- You may feel numbness from a type of anesthesia called a nerve block until it wears off.
- If you are not sure if you had a nerve block, ask your surgeon.

#### Step 3

Wiggle your toes.

Wiggling your toes may improve blood flow to your foot.

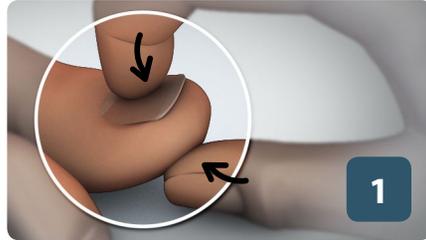


Repeat steps one through three every four hours or as directed by your surgeon.

## Capillary Refill Test

### Step 1

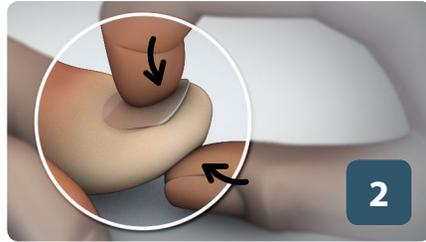
Gently pinch the tip of your toe directly over the toenail with your hand.



### Step 2

Squeeze until your toenail turns white, then let go.

Your toenail should turn pink again within two to three seconds. This sign means you have good blood flow in your leg and foot.



Repeat steps one and two every four hours or as directed by your surgeon.



### Contact your surgeon if you notice your:

- Foot looks red or blue
- Foot looks very swollen
- Foot feels cold, numb, or tingly (unless you had nerve block anesthesia)
- Toenail does not turn pink again within two to three seconds

Watch online at: [gwinnettmedicalcenter.nucleuslibrary.com](http://gwinnettmedicalcenter.nucleuslibrary.com)

This handout is intended to supplement the information you receive from your healthcare provider. This information should never be considered personal medical advice. Always contact your healthcare provider with questions or concerns.