

# ELBOW Post-Operative Instructions

(517) 884-6100



## WOUND CARE

- Maintain your operative dressing until your first post-op appointment.
- It is normal for the incision to bleed and arm to swell following surgery.
- If blood soaks through the bandage, do not become alarmed, reinforce with additional dressing
- To avoid infection, keep surgical incisions clean and dry. You may shower by placing a plastic covering (saran wrap/trash bag) over the surgical site on post-op day 2. No immersion/soaking of the arm.
- Sutures will be removed at your first post-op appointment and then you may begin getting wound site wet per physician instructions.

## IMMOBILIZER/SPLINT

- If prescribed, elbow will be immobilized in a splint/sling following surgery. Do not remove until your first post-op appointment.
- You are to wear the sling at all times until the post-block sensation returns, then the wear sling as needed.

## MEDICATIONS

- If local anesthetics are injected into the wound during surgery, this will last up to 6-8 hours. If you received a nerve block, expect this to last up to 24 hours. It is not uncommon to encounter increased pain on the first or second day after surgery.
- Most patients will require narcotic pain medication for a short time for pain control. This should be taken as directed. Do not drink alcohol or drive while taking narcotic pain medication.
- Common side effects of pain medications are: nausea, drowsiness, constipation. Recommend to take the medication with food. Consider taking an over-the-counter laxative if constipation occurs. Stay well hydrated.
- If you are experiencing nausea and vomiting, contact the office and medications may be changed.
- Do not drive or operate machinery while taking narcotics.

## EXERCISES/ACTIVITY

- You are encouraged to open and close your hand and begin finger movements on the first post-operative day to promote circulation, prevent stiffness, and decrease swelling.
- Physical therapy (PT) or occupational therapy (OT) may be prescribed. A prescription and protocol will be provided at your first post-op appointment.
- Recommend sleeping/resting in an inclined position (ie: reclining chair) with a pillow under the forearm for support.
- Do not engage in activities which increase pain/swelling. Do not resume sports or strenuous activity until cleared by your surgeon.
- Avoid long periods of sitting or long distance traveling for about two weeks. Discuss with your physician.
- NO driving until instructed otherwise by physician.

### FOLLOW-UP CARE/QUESTIONS

A post-operative appointment will be made 10-14 days following surgery. Please refer to paperwork in your green folder for this date and time. If you do not already have an appointment scheduled, please contact one of our surgery coordinators.

### REASONS TO CALL THE OFFICE

- Unrelenting pain, swelling or numbness
- Fever over 101° or chills (normal to have a low grade fever first 1-2 days post-surgery)
- Redness or excess drainage around incision (small amount of drainage is expected)
- Difficulty breathing
- Excessive nausea/vomiting
- Excess calf pain
- Contact our office at **(517) 884-6100**

For emergencies **AFTER OFFICE HOURS or on the weekend**, call (517) 342-6410.  
If you have an emergency that requires immediate attention, proceed to the nearest emergency room.