



Postoperative Instructions for Elbow Surgery

Medications/Diet

1. Eat only light, non-greasy foods today
2. Take pain medicine with food
3. While taking pain medicines, you may **not** operate a vehicle, heavy machinery, or appliances.
4. While taking pain medicines, you may **not** drink alcoholic beverages.
5. While taking pain medicines, you may **not** make critical decisions or sign legal papers.
6. If you have any reactions to your medicines, stop taking them and call my office immediately.
7. Please keep in mind that **constipation** is a very common side effect of taking narcotic pain medication. We recommend that patients take precautions to prevent constipation:
 - Drink plenty of water (6-8 glasses of 8oz. a day)
 - Avoid alcohol, caffeine, and dairy products
 - Eat plenty of fiber (fruits, vegetables and whole grains)
 - Take an over the counter stool softener (Colace or Dulcolax)
 - Patients that have had upper extremity surgery should take frequent walks

Activity/Exercise

1. Exercises are not necessary at this stage, and you will be given exercises at your first postoperative visit
2. You are in an immobilizer or a sling and should remain in this until your first postoperative visit
3. Please continue to move your wrist up and down and make a fist several times every hour to help reduce swelling and stiffness
4. Please keep ice applied to the elbow for the first 72 hours **or** as long as pain or swelling persist. Do **not** apply ice directly to skin, or allow water to leak on your dressing

(over)

Dressings/Shower

1. Please keep dressing dry.
2. If you have had an arthroscopy, you can expect some bloody drainage through your post-op dressing, which is normal.
3. Please reinforce your dressing with a dry sterile dressing.
4. Loosen the ace wrap if it becomes too tight or painful.
5. You may remove your dressing the third day after surgery.
6. Cover your bandage with a trash bag or saran wrap if you shower before removing the dressing.

Emergency/Follow-Up

1. Please notify my office at 631-981-2663 if you develop any fever (101° or above), unexpected warmth, redness or swelling in your elbow. Please call if your fingers become cold, purple, numb, or there is excessive bleeding.
2. Please call the office within 24 hours at 631-981-2663 to schedule a follow up appointment next week.

I have read and understand the above discharge instructions.

Date

Patient or responsible party

R.N.

Physician

