



Upper Extremity Post-operative Instructions

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The following information is designed to answer some of the most frequently asked questions regarding what to expect after surgery. These are general guidelines, if you have any questions or concerns please contact your surgeon's office.

1. Please keep your hand/elbow elevated over the next 2-3 days as much as possible. This will help control your pain and swelling. Resting your arm on a pillow above your heart will be one way to achieve this. If you were given a sling, you may wear this as needed for your comfort.
2. Unless otherwise instructed, you may move your fingers and thumb to your comfort. This will help with stiffness and make your recovery easier. If you are wearing a sling it is important to remove the sling from time to time and move your shoulder and elbow to prevent stiffness.
3. Icing is very important for the first 5-7 days postoperative. While the post-op dressing is in place, icing should be continuous. Once the dressing is removed on the first or second day, ice is applied for 20-minute periods 3-4 times per day. Care must be taken with icing to avoid frostbite to the skin.
4. The anesthetic drugs used during your surgery may cause nausea for the first 24 hours. If nausea is encountered, drink only clear liquids (i.e. Sprite or 7-up). The only solids should be dry crackers or toast. If nausea and vomiting become severe or the patient shows signs of dehydration (lack of urination) please call the doctor or the hospital. A low-grade fever (100.5) is not uncommon in the first 24 hours but unusual beyond. Please call the doctor with any temperature over 101.0 degrees. Should severe calf pain occur or significant swelling of calf and ankle, please call the doctor.
5. Local anesthetics (i.e. Novocaine) are put into the joint during surgery. It is not uncommon for patients to encounter more pain on the first or second day after surgery. This is the time when swelling peaks. Using the pain medication as directed will help control pain with little risk of complication. Taking pain medication before bedtime will assist in sleeping. It is important not to drink or drive while taking narcotic medication. If you were prescribed narcotic medication (i.e. Lortab, Percocet) you can supplement those medications with 200 mg or 400 mg of ibuprofen every 4-6 hours. You should resume your normal medications for other conditions the day after surgery. We have no specific diet restrictions after surgery but extensive use of narcotics can lead to constipation. High fiber diet, lots of fluids, and muscle activity can prevent this occurrence.

6. If this box is checked, you may remove your dressing in 2-3 days and place Band-Aids over the incision. You may get the incision wet at this point, however no submerging the incision in water. After you shower, dry your incision and place a new Band-Aid. Do not use any type of ointment on the incision (i.e. Neosporin). Keep the incision clean.

If this box is checked, please leave your dressing on until you see Dr. Stover in the office. You may shower, however please wrap the splint/dressing in a waterproof product (i.e. Cast bag, sealed plastic bag) prior to showering. If your splint/dressing becomes wet, please call the office.

7. The doctor will need to reexamine you 10-14 days after your surgery. Please call the office to schedule a follow-up appointment.

8. If unexpected problems occur and you need to speak to the doctor, call the office. Dr. Stover's office number is (304) 414-2120. The answering service will answer after business hours.

Additional Instructions:
