

POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS ELBOW FRACTURE

BRACE USE AND DRESSING

- Your brace should remain on at all times
- It is OK to remove for showering
- Your dressing is waterproof, you may shower with it on, and pat dry afterwards
- You may use your hand/wrist/fingers for light activity while in the brace (typing/texting/eating)

MEDICATIONS

- Please follow the attached medication tracking sheet provided
- Most patients will require some narcotic pain medication for a short period of time
- You are also given prescriptions for extra-strength Tylenol and an anti-inflammatory (Celebrex). Use these first to reduce the amount of narcotic medication needed
- In most cases you will also be provided with prescriptions for Aspirin (to prevent blood clots), Omeprazole (to protect stomach while taking NSAIDs), Zofran (if needed for nausea), Colace (recommended to prevent constipation), and a Vitamin D/Calcium supplement (to enhance healing)
- Common side effects of the pain medication are nausea, drowsiness, and constipation – to decrease the side effects, take medication with food
- DO NOT drive or operate heavy machinery while taking narcotic medication. Do not consume alcohol or other recreational drugs while taking narcotic medication.

ICE THERAPY

- Use an icing machine or ice packs for 20 minutes every hour to help reduce pain and swelling

ACTIVITY

- No driving until instructed otherwise by physician, it is illegal to drive in a sling, brace or splint
- May return to sedentary work 3-4 days after surgery, if pain is tolerable
- You are to **avoid** any PUSHING, PULLING, LIFTING greater than the weight of a cup of coffee

EXERCISE

- Formal physical therapy (PT) typically begins after you are seen at your first post-operative appointment. A prescription and protocol will be provided at that time if not before

PAIN MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

- Getting adequate rest, using your sling and icing your shoulder are essential
- Using all medications as prescribed will provide ‘multi-modal’ pain control pathways
- CBD (without THC) is helpful for some patients (oral intake only, DO NOT apply topically)
- Meditation is proven to reduce surgical pain (Headspace app has many relevant sessions)

FOLLOW-UP CARE/QUESTIONS

- Your first post operative visit will be 10-14 days after surgery
- Dr. Reynolds’ office can be reached at 336-716-0077, M-F, 8am – 4pm. Patient portal messages will also be answered during these hours
- Outside of the above hours, you may call the same phone number if you have an emergency to reach the physician on call via an answering service

EMERGENCIES

- Contact Dr. Reynolds' office at 336-716-0077 if any of the following are present:
 - Painful swelling or numbness (note that some swelling and numbness is normal)
 - Unrelenting pain
 - Fever (over 101° it is normal to have a low-grade fever the first day or two after surgery)
 - Redness around incisions
 - Color change in arm and/or hand
 - Continuous drainage or bleeding from incision (a small amount of drainage is expected)
 - Difficulty breathing
 - Excessive nausea/vomiting

If you have an emergency that requires immediate attention, proceed to the emergency room