



## Duke Orthopaedics: Upper Extremity Division

*Christopher Klifto, MD & Alix Ackerman NP-C*

3609 SW Durham Dr, Durham, NC 27707

### **Discharge Instructions after Elbow Arthroscopy**

#### Dressings:

- A sling has been provided for you. You may remove the sling after 72 hours. The sling may be worn for your protection (crowded public areas, etc.).
- You may remove your dressing after 3 days. With an arthroscopy, water is used during the procedure and the bandage may become saturated. If the bandage is wet but mostly clear or pink, it can remain in place for the full 3 days. If it is saturated with red, please call the office or resident on call for further instructions. If the incision sites are still moist after 3 days, place a Band-Aid over the moist site(s). Change Band-Aids daily until dry.

#### Pain Management/Medications:

- You were given a nerve block of the operative arm that will last 8-12 hours. There should be minimal pain during this time period, but expect normal post-operative pain as the block is wearing off.
- You may use ice on the wrist through the splint intermittently over the first 48 hours after surgery and as needed thereafter for pain and swelling control.
- Please resume all normal medications the day after surgery unless otherwise instructed.
- Pain medicine has been prescribed for you. Use your medication liberally as directed over the first 48 hours, and then begin to taper your use.
  - No driving or drinking alcohol while taking narcotic pain medication
- You may take Extra Strength Tylenol or Tylenol in place or in conjunction with you prescribed pain medication. Do not exceed 4,000mg Tylenol per day (including Tylenol in certain prescribed pain medications like Percocet or Norco)
- It is okay to take Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) or Naproxen (Aleve) as needed for pain and inflammation

#### Activity:

- You may move your elbow and use your hand for light activities of daily living. You should not do any heavy lifting or repetitive activities.
- To prevent hand swelling: Move your fingers, squeeze crumpled magazine pages, keep your hand elevated above your elbow, and keep your elbow above your heart
- You may shower 5 days after surgery. The incisions CANNOT get wet prior to 5 days. Simply allow the water to wash over the site and then pat dry. Do not rub the incisions. Make sure your axilla (armpit) is completely dry after showering.

#### Contact:

- During business hours for urgent or routine questions, call Faith and Emily at the office: 919-403-3057
- After hours for emergent questions or concerns call and ask for the orthopaedic resident on call: 919-471-9622
- Contact the office or emergency on-call resident if you notice any of the following:
  - Excessive redness or warmth of the incisions



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- Drainage for more than 4 days after surgery
- Fever of more than 101.5 F
- Worsening numbness of the hand
- Pain, redness, and swelling in your leg

**-Go directly to the closest Emergency Room if you develop chest pain, difficulty breathing, or any complications that require immediate attention.**

Follow-up:

**You should have a post-operative appointment about 14 days after your surgery. A post-op appointment should already be scheduled for you. If you do not have an appointment in 2 weeks or if you need to change the appointment, please call 919-471-9622.**