



Duke Orthopaedics: Upper Extremity Division

Christopher Klifto, MD & Alix Ackerman NP-C

3609 SW Durham Dr, Durham, NC 27707

Discharge Instructions after Elbow surgery

Dressings:

- A soft dressing will be placed after surgery. Please keep in place for 3 days. After 3 days, you may remove the bandage and cover with Band-Aid only if the incision is not dry.
- The dressing CANNOT get wet. If it gets wet, please contact the office for recommendation about wound care needs. The incision itself should stay dry until 5 days out from surgery (2 extra days after bandage can be removed).

Pain Management/Medications:

- You were given a nerve block. This can last around 8-12 hours. The nerve block typically wears off tonight around bedtime or when you are asleep. We recommend taking pain medication prior to going to bed.
- You may use ice on the elbow through the dressing 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)

Activity:

- You are able to, and encouraged to, move your fingers hand, and wrist immediately following surgery. There are no restrictions on the movements of the hand or wrist. Elbow range of motion may gradually progress as tolerated as long as it is not putting too much pressure on your incision.
- No lifting greater than 1-2 pounds.
- Showering: cover elbow with bag/cover and tape to prevent ANY moisture getting to the incision for the first 5 days. The incision may get wet after 5 days and is best washed with warm soapy water.
- Do not to soak the incision in water such as in a bath, pool, or ocean-this restriction will be in place for around 3-4 weeks total
- It is okay to take Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) or Naproxen (Aleve) as needed for pain and inflammation

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.