



Duke Orthopaedics: Upper Extremity Division

Christopher Klifto, MD & Alix Ackerman NP-C

3609 SW Durham Dr, Durham, NC 27707

Discharge Instructions after Total Elbow Replacement

Dressings:

- A sling has been provided for you. Remain in your sling until your block wears off and for comfort and swelling control thereafter. The more the sling is utilized with hand above heart level, the better swelling control. The sling may be removed for dressing and showering when cleared by physician.
- Leave the splint in place until your follow-up appointment
- The splint **CANNOT** get wet. If it gets wet, please contact the office for recommendation about splint care needs

Pain Management/Medications:

- You were given a nerve block of the operative arm that will last approximately 12-24 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 elbow 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)

Activity:

- Avoid weight bearing with the operative upper extremity until your follow-up appointment. Do not push or pull with that arm. Do not lean on operative side through hand or fingers.
- No lifting greater than 1 pound.
- To prevent hand swelling: Move your fingers, squeeze soft ball, keep your elbow above your heart
- Exercises: You may begin active finger flexion and extension (making a fist and opening hand) and shoulder normal motion in all directions as tolerated the day after surgery.
- Showering: cover splint with garbage bag and tape to prevent ANY moisture getting to the splint. Try to avoid water coming in contact with bag covering splint to lessen chance of splint getting wet.

Contact:

- Contact the office or emergency on-call resident if you notice any of the following:
 - Excessive redness or warmth of the incisions
 - 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



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-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.