

Post Operative Instructions
Elbow Arthroscopy
Jason Browdy, M.D.

You have just had an elbow arthroscopy. Following these guidelines should give you the best chance for a quick recovery.

Diet: Advance to solid food as tolerated.

Bandages: Leave your dressings on until you follow up in the office in 2-3 days. If you leave the surgery center with a cooling pad, you may remove it and replace it as needed.

Bathing/Shower: You should keep the surgical site dry until the incision is fully healed. This generally takes 7-10 days. You should consider sponge bathing for the first 7 to 10 days after surgery. Once the incision is fully healed, as determined by Dr. Browdy, you may get your incision wet in the shower, but you should avoid submerging under water until you are four weeks out of surgery.

Activity: You will leave the surgery center with your arm in a sling and possibly a wrist splint. You may come out of the sling periodically to move the elbow and hand but try to avoid moving your wrist. At your first office visit, Dr. Browdy will discuss with you a gradual timeline for return to normal activities.

It is a good idea to get up and move around frequently around your home to prevent blood clots.

Medications: Many patients elect to have a "block" prior to surgery to help with post-operative pain relief. This block provides significant pain relief in the early post-operative period, but it will wear off 12-24 hours after surgery. Your arm will likely remain weak for the duration of the nerve block.

You will be prescribed a narcotic pain medicine to help with control the pain you might experience after the block wears off. It is very important to "stay ahead" of the pain by taking the medication prior to the onset of severe pain. In other words, **do not wait until you hurt to take your pain medicine.** We generally recommend taking your pain medication approximately every six hours during the first 24 hours after surgery. One good strategy is to take the medication about an

Medications (cont.): hour prior to going to bed and plan to take it six hours prior to that time as well.

Pain medicine can cause nausea, so take the medication with food. You may be given a prescription to deal with nausea. You do not need to fill this prescription, but you should keep it handy in the event you need it.

Comfort Measures: A cooling system may have been applied. If not, you may use a large bag of ice. In either case, keeping the shoulder cool will help significantly reduce swelling and pain. If you have an ice machine with a thermostat, do not let the temperature go below 45 degrees, as frostbite can occur.

Problems: It is not uncommon for the hand to experience slight swelling and/or numbness or tingling in the hand. This can be in part due to constriction of the wrist by your sling, and removing the sling periodically can help. It is also common to experience bruising of the elbow for a few days after surgery.

Please contact Dr. Browdy's office if you have any of the following:

1. Severe Pain
2. A Temperature above 101 degrees
3. Pain, redness or significant swelling in your knee or calf (bruising may occur, and in many cases is normal).

Appointments: You will need to see Dr. Browdy for a follow-up appointment. 2-3 days after surgery. Please call the office at 314-721-7325 to make an appointment.

Phone Numbers: Advanced Orthopedics and Sports medicine: 314-721-7325

Medication Refill Policy: **It is the policy of Advanced Orthopedics that narcotic medications will only be refilled during office hours. Please be patient with the office staff. If you call during patient hours, your call may be returned at the end of the day.**