

Post Operative Instructions
Ulnar Collateral Ligament Reconstruction
Jason Browdy, M.D.

You have undergone ulnar ligament reconstruction. Following these guidelines should give you the best chance for a quick recovery.

Diet: Advance to solid food as tolerated.

Bandages: Leave your splint on until you follow up in the office in 7-10 days. If you flew in from out of town for surgery, your splint may be removed by your athletic trainer.

Bathing/Shower: You should keep the surgical site dry until your incision is fully healed. This generally take 7-10 days. For the first 7-10 days after surgery, you will be in a plaster splint, which you will need to keep dry. During this time, you should consider sponge bathing or taking a bath. 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 a splint on the elbow. This should be left intact and should be left clean and dry. You may use a sling, as the splint may be heavy. You may require pain medication for 7-10 days after surgery. Please do not drive after taking pain medication. Plan to have a family member or friend assist with transportation.

It is advisable to get up and “move around” is much as you can tolerate after surgery, as doing so helps prevent blood clots.

We generally allow about two weeks for the incision to heal prior to starting aerobic exercise. Once the incision is healed (about two weeks after surgery), you may consider starting to ride a stationary bike. Please check with Dr. Browdy before initiating this.

Activity (cont.)

When the splint comes off, you will be placed in an elbow brace. This will generally stay on until you are approximately six weeks out of surgery.

Medications:

Many patients elect to have a “block” prior to surgery to help with postoperative pain relief. This block provide significant pain relief in the early postoperative period, but it will wear off 12-24 hours after surgery. Your arm will likely feel weak for the duration of the nerve block.

You will be prescribed narcotic pain medication to help with pain control that 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 pain. In other words, **do not wait until you hurt to take her pain medication.** 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 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 help with nausea. You do not need to fill this prescription, but you should keep handy in the event that you need it.

Comfort Measures:

A cooling system may have been applied at the time of surgery. If not, you may use a bag of ice. In either case, keeping the arm cool may help reduce swelling and pain. If you have an ice machine with a thermostat, do not let the temperature go below 45°, as frostbite can occur.

If you use ice bags, you can apply to the arm for 15-20 minutes at a time. However, please make sure that if you use ice, you keep the splint and dressings dry. If you are applying ice after the splint is off, always use a cloth or towel as a barrier between the ice and your skin to avoid frostbite.

It is advisable to get up and move around frequently after surgery, as doing so helps prevent blood clots.

Problems: You may experience swelling and soreness for several days. This is to be expected. You should contact the office if you experience:

1. Severe pain
2. Temperature above 101°
3. Pain, redness or significant swelling in your calf

In general, please call if you have **any** questions.

Appointments: You will need a follow-up appointment 7-10 days after surgery. Please call the office at 314-721-7325 to make an appointment. If you are from out of town and are recovering elsewhere, alternative arrangements may be made.

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.**