



**Department of Orthopaedic Surgery  
Sports Medicine and Shoulder Service**

**POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR ELBOW SURGERY**

**A. Day of Surgery:**

**Diet:** Begin with liquids and light foods (jello, soup, etc) Progress to your normal diet if you are not nauseated.

**Medication:** Hydrocodone \_\_\_\_\_ Ketorolac \_\_\_\_\_ Other(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Strong pain medication has been prescribed. Use as directed. Do not combine with alcohol. Be careful as you walk, or climb stairs.

**Ice:** Keep an ice pack on your arm for 30 minutes at a time at least 4-5 times per day. Icing will assist with pain and swelling control

**B. First and Second Post-Operative Day:**

**Medication:** Continue to take pain medication as needed every 4-6 hours.

**Ice:** Continue to ice your arm 30 minutes at a time 4-5 times per day.

**Bandage:** Leave bandage on the arm. Keep dry. The bandage may be slightly bloody or wet from the incision. This is normal. **If a splint is present on your arm, keep that dry at all times.**

**C. Third Post-Operative Day Until Return Visit:**

**Medication:** Continue to take pain medication as needed every 4-6 hours.

**Ice:** Continue as on post-op days 1 and 2.

**Bandage:** You may remove surgical bandage on post-operative day #3 if no splint is present on your arm. Leave steri-strips (paper tapes) in position if present. **DO NOT** put any ointments or bacitracin on incisions. You can shower if there is no splint on your arm after removing the dressing and if wounds are dry on post-operative day \_\_\_\_\_. Cover wounds with plastic wrap and secure with tape when showering. If wounds get wet, gently pat the area dry. **DO NOT** soak your arm in water or go swimming in a pool or standing water.

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**Appointment:** You should make a follow-up appointment for approx 14 days from surgery. Please call the office the following business day after surgery if you do not have an appointment already scheduled.

**Physical Therapy:** To begin in 2 to 3 days please call to schedule the appointment if you do not have one already set up. Physical therapy prescription is given to you on your last visit or with your discharge documents.

**Driving:** No driving until you are completely off the pain medications, at full weight bearing and not using crutches. This will be assessed on one of your future clinic visits after surgery.

**Upper Extremity Response to Surgery:** Your arm will be swollen. It may take a few weeks or longer for it to resolve. It is also common to notice bruising of the arm as the swelling resolves. If excessive bleeding at the incision occurs, please notify our office.

**Signature of Physician**

**Signature of RN**

**Signature of Patient**

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