

Upper Extremity Surgery Discharge Instructions

Activities

- Don't use operative limb to support weight until cleared by doctor. Don't use arm to reach, grasp, lift objects.
- Ice frequently until post-op visit (20 minutes every few hours). Put cloth barrier between ice pack and skin.
- Elevate upper extremity to level of heart as much as possible to improve post-op swelling.
- Do not drive until cleared by doctor or if you're still taking narcotic meds.
- Return to work depends on the specific job, this will be discussed at your first post-op visit.

Diet

- Begin with liquids, light food (Jell-O, soup). Progress to regular diet as tolerated.
- Use stool softeners as directed while on pain meds.

Medications

- Take pain meds as prescribed. Please note, it takes meds 30-45 minutes to take effect.
- Do not combine narcotic meds with alcohol. Don't drive or operate machinery if taking narcotics.
- You may take NSAIDS or anti-inflammatory medication (i.e., Advil, Aleve), unless otherwise directed
- Take pain meds with food to prevent GI upset. If symptoms persist or are severe, please call our office.
- Pain meds cause constipation, take with a stool softener such as Colace or Senekot.
- If prescribed, take Aspirin as directed to help prevent blood clots

Physical/Occupational Therapy

- Your therapist may give you home exercises, these are important for pain control, motion & strength.
- We will help schedule post-op therapy, typically at your 1st post-op appointment.

Wound and Dressing/Splint Care

- There may be mild drainage/bleeding on dressing/splint. Call if bandage becomes saturated.
- Do not remove splint/dressings. This will be done at first post-op visit
- OK to remove dressing at 48 hours
- Do not shower until instructed by surgeon
- If you have a cast/splint, do not get wet. Do not soak extremity (i.e bath, hot tub) until cleared by doctor.

Follow-Up Care

- You should have an appointment scheduled for 10-14 days after surgery. We will remove dressings, sutures and review all details with you.
- Please call our office if you need to change this appointment, or if you do not have one scheduled.

Emergencies

Call our office or on call doctor 24 hours/day at **925-939-8585** if you notice any of the following:

- Severe swelling in the upper extremity despite ice & elevation (mild swelling/pain is expected for 4-6 weeks)
- Change of color or temperature in the operative limb (cold or numb fingers, blue or pale skin)
- Continuous or foul-smelling drainage, bleeding from the dressing.
- Fever greater than 101.5 degrees, excessive nausea, or vomiting