

DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS FOR ELBOW SURGERY

Mark Ayzenberg, MD

Please reference www.markayzenberg.com for more patient resources.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Rest and relax today. Do not resume usual activities.
2. You may not bear any weight on your operative arm.
3. **IF you were placed in an elbow splint, please do not remove it.**
4. A sling has been provided to you for your comfort.
5. You may take the sling off while at home to perform shoulder range of motion exercises unless otherwise instructed.
6. **Exercises:** To minimize hand and shoulder stiffness as well as upper back pain, perform slow shoulder shrugs and constantly open and close your fingers (it may helpful to purchase a stress ball at the pharmacy and start to gently squeeze that as well).
7. You may type or write only with your hand, no lifting or additional activities.

CARE OF OPERATIVE SITE:

1. Your splint and dressings will remain intact until your first post-operative visit.
2. You may cover your splint and dressings **water tight** and shower.
3. The dressing may not get wet.
4. If your dressings do get wet or bleeding is seen on the dressings call the office.
5. No baths, swimming or submerging of your incision in water until at least 3 weeks post-op AND cleared by Dr. Ayzenberg.
6. **Swelling:** Swelling is common to experience from the arm down to the fingers. This may cause stiffness and discomfort. This may last for several weeks after surgery. To minimize the swelling, utilize the cryocuff cold therapy unit (if obtained) or ice packs and elevate your elbow and hand above your heart, especially often for the first 3-4 days after surgery, and then several times daily for another 2 weeks. You may continue to use the cold therapy as needed after that, especially after PT sessions.
7. **Signs of Infection:** With any surgery it is important to be aware of signs of infection, which can include: unusual looking incision such as increased redness or smell, drainage to be green or yellow, and increased fever. It is normal to have a slight temperature post operative, but above 101.5 degrees; you should contact our office.

MEDICATIONS:

1. Resume your medications and take any prescribed medications that have been added to your medication list. Your medication list is being sent home with you.
 - a. Take your pain medication with food to avoid any nausea or vomiting.

- b. Dr. Ayzenberg prefers you avoid any NSAIDs such as Ibuprofen (Advil), Motrin, Naprosyn, etc for the first 7-10 days after surgery. Once you no longer require narcotic pain medication, please use Tylenol alone.
 - c. Pain medication may cause constipation. If this occurs, please increase your fluid intake (prune juice). You may also try over the counter stool softeners or laxatives.
 - i. Stool softener: Colace twice a day as directed.
 - ii. Laxatives: Milk of Magnesia as directed. (takes several hours to work).
 - iii. Benadryl: You may utilize Benadryl as needed for itching.
2. In addition to the pain medication, you may take over-the-counter non-steroidal anti-inflammatories (NSAIDs) to control your pain and swelling beginning 10 days after your surgery, as long as you do not have any kidney problems, bleeding problems, or other reasons your doctor does not want you to take NSAIDs.
- a. You may take Motrin by mouth every 8 hours with food **or** Aleve by mouth every 12 hours with food.
 - b. If your surgeon has placed you on a prescription anti-inflammatory prior to surgery, you may take that medication instead of the over-the-counter Motrin/Aleve.
 - c. If you are already taking blood thinners, such as Coumadin or Plavix, these medications should not be combined with non-steroidal anti-inflammatories (Advil/motrin/ibuprofen, Mobic, Aleve, Aspirin, Celebrex, Naproxen, and Voltaren).
 - d. If taking a blood thinner prior to surgery, call your prescribing physician to see when you are to restart your medication.

ANESTHESIA:

1. Patients may experience nausea for the first 24 hours after surgery due to the anesthesia.
2. Most patients receive a nerve block for pain control during surgery and post-operatively.
 - a. This numbing medication lasts for up to 36 hours before abruptly wearing off.
 - b. You may experience some numbness/tingling or burning in your fingers during the first 24-48 hours after surgery.
 - c. Take your pain medication as directed to avoid severe pain when the block wears off.
 - d. To avoid limb injury, use the sling until you have no numbness and full control of movement in your hand and fingers.

POST-OP VISIT:

1. Your first post-operative visit will be 10-14 days after surgery with Dr. Ayzenberg.
2. Please call the office the day after surgery to make or confirm your appointment. The phone number is: (215) 745-4050.
3. If you experience fevers >101.5F, or calf swelling and pain, or any other unexpected symptoms, please call the office or call service immediately.

Emergency Contact

1. If experiencing a true emergency, please call 911 or go to the ER.
2. Our call service is available for phone calls, which will be answered by a physician.
3. Dr. Ayzenberg provides a cell phone (215-817-9928) specifically for his post-operative surgical patients for them to have the ability to contact him directly with questions. You may text or call that number any time. Please leave a voicemail if calling. **Please note, this cell phone is only checked every other day**, usually in the evening and/or early morning. It is meant to provide a direct line of contact for non-emergent concerns but is rarely answered immediately. To contact him during the day or for a faster response, please call the office.

Thank you for entrusting Dr. Ayzenberg with your care.