



# Town Center

## ORTHOPAEDICS

ASHBURN • CENTREVILLE • FAIRFAX • RESTON

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### Post-Operative Instructions Following Elbow Arthroscopy

#### **1. WHEN DO I COME IN FOR MY FIRST FOLLOW-UP VISIT?**

If an appointment has not already been scheduled, please call the office the day following surgery to schedule an appointment for approximately one week after your surgery.

#### **2. WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT AFTER SURGERY?**

After arthroscopy, it is normal to experience some discomfort. A pain medication prescription was sent to your pharmacy. Please use the medication regularly as directed for the first twenty-four hours and then as needed after the first day. Tylenol (Acetaminophen) may be used along with or in place of the prescription medication.

If you have been prescribed Celebrex (Celecoxib), you should not take additional anti-inflammatories.

A low-grade temperature (99-101 degrees F) is common. Please call the office if your temperature is consistently elevated over 101.5 degrees.

When resting, try to keep the surgical elbow and forearm elevated for the first two days. Your elbow and forearm should be elevated above your heart as much as possible.

#### **3. WILL I HAVE AN EXERCISE PROGRAM TO FOLLOW?**

You will be started on an exercise program to help rehabilitate your ankle when you come to the office for the first post-operative visit. Depending on the findings at surgery and your status at your follow-up visit, either a home program or formal physical therapy at a therapist's office will be prescribed.

#### **4. HOW LONG SHOULD I KEEP MY ELBOW DRY AND WEAR THE BANDAGE?**

The bandage should be kept dry and in place for 48 hours. For the first 48 hours, it is best to take baths and not submerge your elbow.

Forty-eight hours after surgery, please remove and discard the bandages. There will be several stitches. At this point the stitches may get wet in the shower. Following your shower, pat the stitches dry and place Band-Aids over them. Do not immerse your elbow in water (i.e. swimming, baths, or hot tubs) while the stitches are in place.

#### **6. WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP REDUCE SWELLING AND DISCOMFORT?**

Limiting your activities and resting with your elbow and forearm elevated above your heart are the best methods of reducing swelling and discomfort and will speed up your recovery. Ice may also be used. This can be done by filling a plastic bag with ice cubes and placing it over your elbow with a towel between the skin and the ice bag. Leave the ice in place for 15-30 minutes. This may be done every hour while awake.

It is a good idea to squeeze and open your fist repeatedly during the day. Writing and keyboarding are permitted as soon as you wish.

Regarding your activity level, it is best to limit your activity level for the first two days with your elbow elevated above your heart. As your discomfort decreases, use common sense as your guide. Advance your daily activities as tolerated. Painful and strenuous activities are to be avoided.

#### **7. WHAT EFFECTS MIGHT I NOTICE FROM THE ANESTHESIA?**

General anesthesia can result in some fatigue and lethargy for a day or two. Occasionally, nausea may occur. Eating light foods will help. Resume your regular diet as the nausea resolves.