



## **SRMH Orthopedics and Sports Medicine**

Phone: 540-689-5500

### **Dr. Muxlow's Postoperative Instructions for Elbow Surgery**

#### **Medications/ Diet**

1. Eat only light, non-greasy foods today.
2. Take pain medication with food.
3. Do not take any aspirin for one week after surgery unless you have a prior cardiac history or history of blood clots (Discuss with surgeon or cardiologist if you have any questions)
4. You may supplement pain medication with Ibuprofen if needed
5. While taking pain medication, you may **not** operate a vehicle, heavy machinery, or appliances.
6. While taking pain medications, you may **not** drink alcoholic beverages.
7. While taking pain medication, you may **not** make critical decisions or sign legal papers.
8. If you have any reactions to your medications, stop taking them and call the office immediately.
9. Please keep in mind that constipation is a very common side effect of taking narcotic pain medication.
  - Recommendations to prevent constipation
    - o Drink plenty of water (6-8 glasses of 8 oz. per day)
    - o Avoid alcohol, caffeine, and dairy products
    - o Eat plenty of fiber (fruits, vegetables, and whole grains)
    - o Take an over the counter stool softener (Colace or Dulcolax)
    - o Patients that have upper extremity surgery should take frequent walks

#### **Activity/ Exercise**

1. Exercises are not necessary at this stage. You will be given exercises at your first postoperative visit.
2. You are in an immobilizer or a sling and should remain in this until your first postoperative visit.
3. Please continue to move your wrist up and down and make a fist several times every hour to help reduce swelling and stiffness.
4. **Please keep ice applied to the elbow for the first 72 hours or as long as pain or swelling persists. Do not apply ice, ice bag, or cooling device directly to the skin, or allow water to leak on your dressing.**



### **Dressings/ Shower**

1. Please keep dressing dry
2. If you had arthroscopic surgery, you may expect some bloody drainage on your dressing.
3. Please reinforce your dressing with a dry sterile dressing as needed.
4. You may remove your dressing 48 hours after surgery and cover incisions with Band-Aids. If steri-strips (small white tapes) are covering your incision, leave in place and do not peel off (there is no need to cover these with Band-Aids)
5. Do **not** apply antiseptic ointment or medicine to incisions.
6. You may shower 72 hours after surgery.
  - **Do not swim or submerge incisions**

### **Emergency/ Follow-up**

1. Please call the office at 540-689-5500 if you develop any fever (101<sup>0</sup> or above), unexpected warmth, redness, or swelling in your shoulder. Please call if your fingers become cold, purple, numb, or if there is excessive bleeding from your incisions.
2. Please call the office within 24 hours at 540-689-5500 to schedule a follow-up appointment for next week.

\*\*\* Please call office at 540-689-5500 before 3pm on Friday if you do not have enough pain medication for the weekend.