

Post-Operative Care Instructions

Upper Extremity Reconstruction

ACTIVITY & DIET

Observe the patient carefully during the ride home so that if vomiting occurs, assistance can be given. Do not give drinks in the car as patients may experience motion sickness after surgery.

We strongly suggest that the patient is taken straight home from the hospital. If you are unable to stay home with the patient, you should go over the instructions you have been given with the responsible adult who will care for the patient. The patient may be a little sleepy and unsteady on their feet for many reasons: anesthesia used during surgery, medications used to treat nausea, vomiting or pain, and interruption of normal sleep habits.

Patients who have undergone general anesthesia or sedation should not drive any motor vehicle or operate machinery with blades or fans, or drink alcoholic beverages for 24 hours or while taking prescription medication for pain. No medication should be taken unless ordered or approved by the surgeon.

- You may resume your normal diet and activity as pain allows. Take short walks several times a day
- Try to “take it easy”. Don’t start any major projects in the next few weeks
- Cold compresses on hand or wrist may help with swelling and pain
- No lifting more than 5 pounds with the operative hand until cleared by your surgeon
- Keep the operative hand elevated as much as possible to reduce swelling and pain
- Make fist pumps (open & close hand) 10x per hour while awake

DRESSING & WOUND CARE

- Keep your surgical dressings in place until **2 days** after surgery
- Avoid heavy lifting of strenuous activity
- In 2 days, you may remove the dressings, shower and wash gently with regular soap and water
- You may replace your dressings with clean and dry dressings if you would like, but you are not required to have a dressings over the incisions after this time
- A small amount of drainage from the incision sites is normal during the first few days after surgery. You may find it helpful to place clean gauze or an absorbent dressing over the incisions to protect clothing
- Avoid soaking in bath tubs until cleared by your surgeon. No chlorinated swimming pools for 4 weeks after surgery. No swimming in open water or hot tubs for 6 weeks after surgery

MEDICATIONS

- You may use Tylenol (acetaminophen) or Advil (Motrin/Ibuprofen) for pain. Take these medications as directed on the label
- You may be prescribed additional pain medication if needed. Do not drive vehicles or operate heavy machinery while using narcotic pain medications
- Resume taking your preoperative medications unless otherwise instructed by your surgeon

WHAT TO WATCH FOR: Report the following signs or symptoms to your doctor:

EXCESSIVE BLEEDING • FOUL SMELLING DRAINAGE • REDNESS OR SWELLING AT INCISION SITE • PERSISTENT NAUSEA OR VOMITING • TEMPERATURE OF 101° OR ABOVE • SEVERE OR WORSENING PAIN

You may call the office at any time at **928-774-2300**. A surgeon from our practice is on-call and available 24/7

RETURN APPOINTMENT: You should be scheduled to see your surgeon 1-2 weeks after your surgery. If you do not already have an appointment scheduled call the office to schedule