

## General Post-Surgical Instructions

Laith Al-Shihabi, MD

### Diet

- Many sedatives or pain medications given with surgery can cause nausea. Symptoms typically improve within the first 12-24 hours.
- Begin with liquids and easy-to-digest foods first, then progress to your normal diet.
- Constipation and itching are also common side-effects of prescription pain medication. Use an over-the-counter laxative or anti-histamine if you experience these symptoms.

### Pain Medication

- Use your prescription pain medication as needed to control pain. Take any other prescribed medications as directed.
- If your arm was numbed (blocked) for the surgery by the anesthesiologist, begin taking pain medication before the block wears off.
- Do not drive or operate machinery while taking prescription pain medication.
- Unless you cannot take them for other medical reasons, it is ok to use over-the-counter anti-inflammatory medication (e.g. Advil or Aleve) in addition to your prescription pain medication. Do not take Tylenol, as your prescription already contains this medication.

### Wound Care

- Keep your surgical incision and dressings clean and dry.
- Elevation of the hand, along with ice on-and-off for 20 minutes at a time, will help with swelling and pain.
- You may shower, but the incision and dressings must stay clean and dry. Place a waterproof covering over the dressings while bathing or showering (such as a heavy plastic bag that is sealed with Saran wrap).
- Unless you have been instructed otherwise, your dressings should stay in place until removal at either your first post-operative or therapy visit.
- If the dressings get dirty, wet, or come apart please contact the office.

### Activity

- Start moving any fingers or joints not covered by a surgical dressing as soon as possible.
- Avoid heavy lifting, carrying, pushing, or pulling with your hand until instructed to do so.
- Do not return to any sports or exercise before being cleared to do so.
- Use of the hand for work or school will be limited after surgery. In general, you can use your hand for light activity, but unless instructed otherwise do not lift, carry, push, or pull anything heavier than a glass of water or can of soda.
- Contact our office if you need a note specifying your work or school restrictions.

### Therapy

- Therapy needs vary greatly depending on the surgery performed. If you require therapy, this will be scheduled at or before your first postoperative visit.

## **Emergencies**

-Please contact the nursing line at 262-303-5055 x3003 during daytime hours if you experience any of the following:

- Uncontrollable pain or swelling
- Worsening tingling/numbness (note that these symptoms are common up to 18 hours after use of a block by your surgeon or anesthesiologist, but they should decrease with time)
- Drainage or bleeding that does not stop
- Difficulty breathing
- Fevers > 101.5 degrees; low-grade fevers are common after surgery
- Severe nausea, vomiting, or constipation

-If you have an emergency over the weekend or after-hours, call 262-303-5055 for the answering service.

## **Follow-up Questions**

-Please contact our office administrator Deanna by phone at 262-303-5019 or email at [dmann@orthowisconsin.com](mailto:dmann@orthowisconsin.com) for any scheduling or appointment-related questions.

-If you do not already have a first postoperative appointment, please call the office during normal business hours to schedule one.

Responsible Party\_\_\_\_\_ RN\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_ Time\_\_\_\_\_