

Elbow MCL Reconstruction Post-Operative Instructions

- **PAIN**

- Most patients require some narcotic medication after surgery. You will be given a prescription(s) with instructions for its use. *Do not take more than prescribed.* If your pain is not adequately controlled, contact the surgeon on call. Phone numbers are provided.
- If you had a nerve block done by anesthesia, please contact Dr. Swenson with questions. He will provide you with the contact information. When the nerve block wears off, pain can increase so you may notice you will need more oral narcotics at that time.
- Common side effects of the narcotics include nausea, vomiting, drowsiness, constipation, and difficulty urinating. If you experience constipation, use an over the counter laxative. Minimize the risk of constipation by staying well hydrated and including fiber in your diet. If you have difficulty urinating, try spending a little time out of bed on the crutches. If it is not possible for you to urinate and you become uncomfortable, it is best if you go to the Emergency Room to get catheterized.
- Contact the office if you have nausea and vomiting. This is usually caused by the anesthesia or narcotics. We will either give you a medication for nausea at time of surgery or we will call it in to a pharmacy if you experience these symptoms.
- Do not drive or make important business decisions while using narcotics.
- Anti-inflammatories (advil, naprosyn, aleve, etc) may be taken in conjunction with the pain medication to help reduce the amount of narcotics needed. Do not take extra Tylenol if the pain medication given to you already has Tylenol in it.

- **WOUND CARE**

- A plaster splint will be placed on your arm after surgery. You will not be able to bend or straighten your arm. However, gently make a loose fist and spread your fingers apart to keep the circulation moving in your arm.
- **DO NOT REMOVE THE SPLINT, DO NOT REMOVE THE DRESSING.**
- Use the Cryocuff or Ice as often as possible for the first 3-4 days, then as needed for pain relief.
- A sling will be placed on your arm in the recovery room.
- Rest with a pillow under your elbow.
- Your fingers may become swollen. Moving them frequently will help minimize this.
- You may notice SLIGHT numbness / tingling in your fingers. This is normal for the first 12-24 hours. If this persists, please contact the office. You may be directed to loosen the Ace bandage on your arm.
- You may shower on Post-Op Day #1. Please cover your arm and the splint with plastic wrap and secure it around your upper arm with tape. Gently pat the area dry. Do not get the splint wet – it will disintegrate. Do not soak the elbow in water. Do not go swimming in the pool or ocean until your sutures are removed.
- A low-grade temperature is very common within the first few days of surgery. This can often be treated with getting out of bed in a sitting or standing position, deep breathing and coughing to clear the lungs. If fevers, pain or swelling continue, please call.

- **EXERCISES**

- Avoid lifting heavy items with your operated arm until seen in the office for suture removal.
- Please perform the exercises on the attached Home Exercise Program 2-3 times daily.

- Pendulums
- Scapular Tightening
- Hand / Wrist Range of Motion Exercises
- Grip Strengthening
- **DIET**
 - Begin with clear fluids and light foods (jello, clear broths). Progress to a regular diet as tolerated.
- **CONCERNS/QUESTIONS**
 - If you feel unrelenting pain, notice incision redness, continuous drainage or bleeding from wounds, continued fevers greater than 101°, difficulty breathing or excessive nausea/vomiting, please call **(801) 587-7040** during regular office hours or **(801) 587-7100** (physicians' answering service) after 4:00 pm or on weekends.
 - If you have an emergency that requires immediate attention, proceed to the nearest Emergency Room.
- **FOLLOW UP APPOINTMENTS**
 - If you do not already have a follow up appointment scheduled, please call (801) 587-7109 during normal office hours and ask to schedule an appointment. I would like to see you back in 10-14 days post-operatively. However, if there are any post-operative surgical concerns, please call and we will get you in sooner.
- **STUDY PATIENTS**
 - We thank you for participating in clinical studies. Our intention is to improve your care and the care of future patients.
 - If you have any questions regarding the study, please call the numbers provided on the study documents or you may contact the office numbers provided below.
- **IMPORTANT NUMBERS**
 - Questions
 - During Office Hours (8:00-4:00)
 - Kattie Lindsay (MA) 801-587-7040
 - January Day (Practice Coordinator) 801-587-0989
 - Mark Beese (ATC) 801-587-1473
 - After Hours (Tell the hospital operator your surgeon's name and they will contact the appropriate on call physician)
 - 801-581-2121
 - Office Appointment Scheduling
 - 801-587-0989
 - Surgery Scheduling
 - Françoise 801-587-7187
 - Physical Therapy
 - 801-587-7005
 - Toll Free
 - 1-800-824-2073



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