

**Joint Replacement, Sports Medicine,
Fracture Care & General Orthopaedics**

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ELBOW SURGERY - Postoperative Instructions

- Ulnar Nerve Decompression/Transposition**
- Tennis or Golfer's Elbow Surgery**
- Bursectomy**

Follow-up appointment: Our office will call you the next business day after surgery to schedule a postoperative visit (usually 10 days postop). At that time you will be given the opportunity to ask questions about your surgery or discuss any difficulties you may have.

About your dressing: Your elbow is covered with a sterile dressing following the procedure, and this should be kept clean and dry for 72 hours. You may shower or bathe, but be sure that the dressing is covered with a plastic bag and out of the flow of water. You may change the dressing at any time if it becomes soiled or wet. Remove the dressing after three days and cover the wound with gauze or a large band aid. The stitches used to close the wounds are made of nylon and will be removed when you return for your follow-up visit. In some circumstances, the surgeon will opt to use an absorbable suture- in that case, you will see steristrips (small pieces of tape) on the skin and no sutures.

About pain and swelling: Some discomfort is to be expected following this surgery. Your surgeon uses a local anesthesia surrounding the incision that will provide pain relief for 6-10 hours following surgery. The best way to control the discomfort is to keep the arm elevated (above the level of the heart) and apply ice (enclosed in a plastic bag and wrapped in a dry towel) to the elbow for 20 minutes out of an hour, repeating as needed.

For pain, use the narcotic medication that your doctor ordered. Please do not combine narcotics with alcoholic beverages.

Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatories (like Motrin, Advil or Aleve) may be used with or instead of the narcotic medication.

Postoperative activities: You have been provided a sling that should be worn during the first week postoperatively. It is okay to be out of the sling periodically to start some gentle motion to the elbow, wrist and hand. Making a fist then stretching your fingers out wide repetitively will speed up your recovery and help the pain/swelling to disappear more quickly. Avoid any lifting greater than 5 pounds or repetitive activities for the first month or until cleared by your doctor.

Return to driving/work: Please do not drive for 24 hours following surgery. **OK to resume driving when you are no longer taking narcotics and can comfortably grip the steering wheel.** Return to work will depend on your work duties- this should be discussed with your surgeon.

Warning signs: Please call our office at (978)534-6333 for fevers, chills, excess drainage, severe pain or any questions.