

*Orthopedics & Joint Replacement*

*Mercy Medical Center*

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# **Post Operative Instructions**

## **General Upper Extremity Procedures**

*Dr. Mark Slabaugh*

# *Post-Operative Instructions*

Continue to wear your sling/immobilizer **at all times**, even while sleeping. You may remove your sling to move the elbow, wrist, and fingers. This should be done several times daily. You may adjust the straps for comfort.

Apply ice to the surgical site for the first 3 days following your procedure. Never apply ice directly to the skin and apply ice in 20-minute intervals. Use ice as needed in the following days.

Keep the wound/incision clean and dry. Please wash your hands thoroughly before handling the dressings/wound. Keep pets away from your surgical area. The dressing should be removed on third day after surgery, then cover wounds with a non-adherent gauze dressing (available from any drug store). It is normal to have a small amount of blood on the dressings. Do not remove the steri-strips or cut any of the visible sutures. Do not apply ointments, creams or lotions to your incision. If you have been given a pair of white compression stockings, these are considered part of your dressing and may be removed 3 days after your surgery as well.

You may shower on the 4th day after surgery. Let the water gently run over the incision site. Do not soak or submerge the incision site in water until 3 weeks after the surgery. Pat the incision site dry and apply a new, clean dressing/band-aids after bathing.



# *Post Operative Instructions*

Take all medications as directed. You should start to wean off of the narcotics around 2-3 days after the surgery. You may take an anti-inflammatory (i.e. Motrin or Aleve) to help with pain control and swelling.

Call the office if any signs of infection occur. This includes redness, drainage, foul odor or increasing warmth at the incision site and/or fever  $\geq 101.5^{\circ}\text{F}$ . Slight redness and warmth around the incision is common for several days after the surgery.

If you received an upper extremity nerve block prior to your surgery, this will help to control your pain after your procedure. You may continue to experience numbness in your shoulder, arm and/or hands following your procedure. This may last several hours and into the following day. You should start to take the narcotics once you start to feel any pain or feel the sensation returning to your hand/arm.

Please call (410) 951-7925 on the next business day after your surgery to schedule or confirm your follow-up appointment in the office for 10-14 days after your procedure. A prescription for physical therapy will be given. Please ensure that you start physical therapy 3-14 days after surgery.

Please remember that it is the office policy that no prescriptions will be prescribed over the phone after business hours or on weekends. If you feel that you will run out of your pain medication before your scheduled post-operative appointment, you must contact the office during business hours to request medication refills.

