



POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR HAND / UPPER EXTREMITY SURGERY Department of Orthopaedics

PATIENT'S NAME MED. REC # DOB Patient Identification

Instructions Following Anesthesia or Sedation

The medicine that you received today is strong. It will affect your body for at least the next few hours. You may have trouble with coordination or thinking because of this medicine. Your nurse will go over these instructions with you, but please read them over when you get home and again in the morning. For your safety, follow these recommendations carefully for the next 24 hours:

- Do not drive at all. Do not drink alcoholic beverages. Do not smoke. You should rest today. Do not go to work. You should not do things that require you to think and act quickly. Avoid cooking and operating machinery or electrical appliances. Get help today with child or elder care. You should not make important decisions or sign legal papers today. The medicine may make you feel sleepy or sick to your stomach or you may have a poor appetite. If these problems are severe or if they last a long time, call your doctor.

Pain and Prescription Medicines

We will give you an updated list of your current medicines before you go home, with instructions on what medicines to take or stop taking when you go home. Please refer to this list.

Prescriptions given to you: [] today [] in office before surgery [] none

Your last dose of pain medicine was: _____ You may take another dose at _____, if needed.

- In addition to any pain medicine that your doctor has prescribed: [] You may take Tylenol (acetaminophen). Do not take more than 4000 mg in 24 hours. Please note that some narcotic medicines may contain Tylenol (acetaminophen). These include medicines like Percocet, Tylenol #3, and Vicodin. [] You may take Motrin, ibuprofen or similar medicine [] today [] in 24 hours [] in 48 hours [] Do not take Motrin, ibuprofen or similar medicine. Do not drive while you are taking "narcotic" pain medicine. If you are not having pain, stop taking the pain medicine. Nausea, dizziness and drowsiness are normal side effects of prescribed pain medicine. If you have these symptoms and cannot tolerate them, stop taking the pain medicine. Some pain medicines can cause constipation. If this happens, you may take a stool softener (such as Colace), or a gentle laxative (such as Milk of Magnesia). You do not need a prescription for these. You may apply ice for the first 48 hours after surgery. [] You have received a prescription for an antibiotic. Take it as directed.

Surgical Dressing

- [] Keep your dressing clean and dry until your follow-up appointment. [] If there is blood and drainage on your dressing, wrap over it with clean gauze or an ace bandage. [] You can remove the dressing _____ days after surgery. [] Other instructions about your dressing: _____

Stitches and General Care

- [x] Stitches will be removed 10 to 15 days after surgery. [x] Keep your hand raised at a level above your heart for 24 hours after surgery. [] Keep your brace or splint on at all times. [] You may take off the sling after 48 hours if it is more comfortable for you.



POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

Date: ___ / ___ / ___

➔ Patient Name: _____

MRN: _____

Bathing

- Do not get the wound wet until after your follow-up visit.
- Do not get the wound wet for ___ days after surgery.
- You may shower after ___ days. Pat the wound dry and cover it with a clean dressing.
- No tub bathing, pool or hot tub use** until your stitches are removed.

Activity

- You may resume all your usual activities as tolerated
- Avoid demanding activities and heavy lifting.
- Do not put any weight on the part of the body that had the surgery.
- Rehabilitation will begin at your first after-surgery visit.

Diet

- Start with light meals and then go back to a regular diet
- Drink lots of water

How You May Feel

You may have any of the following symptoms as you recover from surgery. These are normal:

As your incision heals

- A slightly red area around the incision
- A small amount of clear or light red fluid staining the dressing
- A ridge along the incision (this will go away)

Other normal reactions to surgery and/or anesthesia

- Some bouts of nausea and vomiting
- Mild swelling at the area of surgery
- Slight bloating of the abdomen
- Muscle aches, headaches or feeling tired
- Gas pains
- Cramps

Call Your Doctor if....

Your doctor, or someone covering for your doctor, is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. **If you have chest pain, trouble breathing or any other emergency, please dial 911 or call your local emergency services.** Call your doctor right away or come to the Emergency Unit for care if you have any of the following:

- Temperature of 101 degrees or higher, and/or chills
- Nausea and vomiting that lasts more than 24 hours
- Worsening pain not relieved by pain medicine
- Redness around the incision that is spreading
- Bright red blood, or foul-smelling discharge coming from the wound
- Cannot urinate (pee)
- Increasing drowsiness (sleepiness)
- Rash, itching, hives
- Leg swelling

Return Visit

- You have a follow-up appointment in the Orthopaedic Surgery Clinic on: ___ / ___ / ___ at ___:___ a.m. / p.m. Call 617-667-7673 if you need to make any changes to the date and time.
- You have an appointment with Occupational Therapy on ___ / ___ / ___ at ___:___ a.m. / p.m.

Additional Comments

X _____ Patient's Signature _____ Print Name _____ **OR**

X _____ Signature of Person authorized to sign for patient _____ Print Name _____ and _____ Relationship to patient

Date: ___ / ___ / ___ Time: ___ : ___ o a.m. o p.m.

X _____ M.D. Signature _____ Print Name _____ / ___ / ___ Date _____ Time (24 hour)

INTERPRETER (if applicable) - Name or ID Number: _____



