
Post-op Instructions for Hardware Removal

These instructions are to compliment the information given by the Dr. McCarthy, nursing staff and physical therapists. They cover many of the common questions.

Wound Care

- Dressings are to be kept clean and dry. A small amount of clear drainage or bleeding is normal. If an ace wrap is present, and feels too tight, you may loosen it and re-wrap it.
- If a splint is present, it should remain on until your follow-up in the clinic with your surgeon. When showering, please place a plastic bag over the splint and secure it with tape. You may wrap your arm with Glad Press & Seal plastic wrap instead of a plastic bag. To keep the splint dry, you may wrap a small towel around the splint prior to applying the plastic bag or wrap. Pat the splint dry immediately with a clean towel if it does get slightly wet or blow dry on a cool setting.
- If no splint is present, you may get the incision wet when showering 3 days after surgery. The shower should be brief and the wound patted dry with a clean towel. No baths or soaking the incision until approximately 3-4 weeks after surgery or until scabs are absent and incision is completely healed.
- If you develop purulent drainage (thick white or greenish in color) from the wound, increasing redness, or if you are having a temperature of 101 or higher, please report these symptoms to your surgeon or the doctor on call.

Pain/Swelling

- To lessen pain and swelling, use ice after surgery. Put the ice covered with a towel and place over the surgical site. We recommend 20 minutes, 4-5 times per day for the first 1-3 days then as needed based on symptoms. Do not place ice or cooling devices directly on the skin for prolonged periods of time as it may damage the skin.
- Narcotic pain medication will be prescribed for use, if needed, after you leave the hospital in limited amounts. Try to wean down/off as soon as you are able. Use acetaminophen (Tylenol) and/or anti-inflammatories (Ibuprofen or Aleve) as main medications for pain control as/if appropriate. Add the narcotic medication for additional pain control if needed. It can help to stagger your pain medications. If a refill of medication is needed, please call the office during regular business hours, Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. In general, refills will not be made after hours or on weekends as they need to be picked up. Please plan ahead.
- Also narcotic medications can cause constipation so you may want/need to use an over the counter stool softeners/laxatives as needed.

- Swelling to some degree is common after surgery. To reduce swelling, elevation is very helpful. Elevate the affected extremity above the heart level for the first 2-5 days after surgery. Elevation for 30 minutes every 2 hours is a good initial recommendation. Excessive pain and swelling should be reported to your surgeon.

Driving

- To drive you must no longer be taking narcotic pain pills. Also, you must feel strong and alert.

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