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### **Arthroscopy of the Elbow Patient Discharge Education**

Your arm will be in some type of sling or splint.

#### **Sling:**

Unless otherwise instructed by your physician please stay in the splint until follow up or as directed in your rehabilitation protocol. Use your hand and wrist freely unless otherwise instructed. **You will be given a detailed rehabilitation protocol for you and your physical therapist to follow after surgery. Please refer to this sheet for any range of motion or weight bearing restrictions. Take this rehabilitation instruction sheet with you to your first physical therapy appointment.**

#### **Splint:**

Unless otherwise instructed by your physician keep your splint on until follow up. Please keep your splint clean, and dry. Do not stick anything inside the splint to scratch/itch to prevent possible skin injury and infections. If your splint becomes wet please contact your physician. **You will be given a detailed rehabilitation protocol for you and your physical therapist to follow after surgery. Please refer to this sheet for any range of motion or weight bearing restrictions. Take this rehabilitation instruction sheet with you to your first physical therapy appointment.**

Keep the wounds dry until and dressings in place until 72 hours after surgery (unless you are in a splint and this will be removed by your surgical team at your initial follow up visit). After that time, you may shower letting warm soapy water run across the surgical site but DO NOT SOAK, SCRUB OR SUBMERGE THE INCISIONS UNDERWATER. You will notice special band-aids on the skin (steri-strips). Leave these in place. The other dressings may be removed. Dry gauze may be placed back over the incisions. Use the compression wrap (elbow only) until it is evident that you do not need it. You will be guided by your physician or therapist. If the wrap feels too tight, loosen it.

If swelling in the joint is a major problem, contact your doctor. Common options for treatment of recurrent swelling will include the use of oral anti-inflammatory medication so that pain can be relieved and therapy can be continued. With elbow arthroscopy,

elevate your elbow higher than your heart if there is swelling.

If you have pain, use your pain medication as prescribed. Icing will also help reduce pain. You may have received an ice machine. If so, you may use this as instructed. If not, and you have discomfort, place the ice bag on the joint for approximately 20 minutes. Do not place the ice bag directly on the skin. This can be repeated 4 to 5 times per day. Remove immediately if any numbness or tingling occur.

**CRYOCUFF:** Keep cold therapy cuff on at all times for the first 24 hours after surgery. Refill with cold water every hour while awake. Icing is very important to decrease swelling and pain, and improve mobility. After 24 hours, continue to use the cuff 3-4 times a day, 15-20 minutes each time, to keep swelling to a minimum. If you do not have the crycuff, using ice on the operative limb 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off is appropriate. Always keep something between the Cryocuff and/or Ice and your skin to prevent injury to your skin.

#### **Medications:**

- Pain Control: Most patients will require some narcotic pain medication (i.e. vicodin, oxycodone, norco, hydrocodone, or other codeine-derivative) for 1-2 days after surgery – please take as instructed. It is important not to drink alcohol or drive while taking narcotic medication. If your pain is minimal, you may discontinue the use of narcotics. Ibuprofen 600-800 mg (i.e. Advil) can be taken as needed in between doses of narcotic pain medication for additional pain control.
  - o We will also provide a prescription for Tylenol to assist in pain control. Tylenol Extra Strength 1000mg. You can take this as needed for pain control every 8 hours, not to exceed more than 3000mg or 3g of Tylenol or Acetaminophen per day
    - Caution: Acetaminophen or Tylenol is often in other medications, especially cold medications.
- Nausea: Zofran will be prescribed for post operative nausea related to surgery or the pain control medications.
- Blood Clot Prevention: Unless otherwise instructed, take an aspirin 81 mg daily for 4 weeks following surgery. This may lower the risk of a blood clot developing after surgery. Should severe calf pain occur or significant swelling of calf and ankle, please call the doctor.
- Constipation: The use of narcotics can lead to constipation. Adequate hydration and over-the counter stool softeners can minimize constipation problems. You will also be given a prescription for a stool softener to assist with post operative constipation.
- Normal medications: Resume the day after surgery unless otherwise instructed.

You will normally have an appointment in this office within one to two weeks after surgery. This appointment should be made before surgery. If not, please make an appointment with your doctor or their nurse practitioner/physician assistant. If you have any other questions, please contact your doctor.

\*\*\* If you have any other questions, or If you experience severe pain that is not relieved

by the pain medication, please let us know. If you experience a temperature over 101.5°F, redness or swelling in your thigh or calf, please contact our office immediately at 775-786-3040, or if after hours, call and ask for the Orthopaedic Surgeon on-call.