

PROXIMAL HUMERUS FRACTURE



Post-Operative Instructions

Wound Care

Keep your dressing on until your first post-op appointment. It is normal for some bleeding to occur. If you bleed through your dressing, do not be alarmed. Reinforce your dressing with additional gauze. Do not remove your dressing. Swelling and bruising down into the elbow and chest wall is not uncommon.

Showering

Showering is allowed with the dressing we apply. Carefully remove your shoulder sling before showering. **Do NOT submerge your dressing underwater. This means NO baths, swimming, or hot tubs for at least three weeks after surgery.** Let the water run over the dressing. Make sure to use your opposite arm to clean under your armpit with warm, soapy water.

Ice Therapy

Icing is very important for the first 10-14 days after surgery. **Begin icing immediately after surgery.** Use an ice machine continuously or ice packs every 2 hours for 20 minutes daily until your first post-operative visit. Remember to keep your arm supported while icing. Care must be taken with icing to avoid frostbite to the skin. To avoid frostbite, place a T-shirt between the ice and your skin.

Sling

Wear your sling at all times, including for sleep, except when showering. It is important to **remove your sling several times a day to move your elbow, wrist, and hand to prevent stiffness.** Do not move your shoulder away from your body.

Eating

The anesthetic drugs used during your surgery may cause nausea for the first 24-48 hours. If nausea is encountered, eat and drink only clear liquids (i.e. Sprite or 7-up, jello, and soup). The only solids should be dry crackers or toast. If nausea and vomiting become severe or if there are signs of dehydration, please call the office. We also provide you with an anti-nausea medication, either ondansetron or promethazine, that you should take as prescribed. You may progress to your normal diet if you are not nauseated.



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Hours: 8:00am-4:30pm

After Hours Assistance: (518) 489-2663

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Driving

NO driving until instructed otherwise by physician. Absolutely no driving while taking narcotic medication.

Medications

A nerve block is used during surgery which may last up to 24 hours. However, it is important to still **take your pain medication to stay ahead of the pain**. You should start your pain medications when you get home.

Most patients will require some **narcotic** pain medication (such as **OXYCODONE**) for the first 10-14 days. A short course of a strong **anti-inflammatory** medication called **TORADOL** (ketorolac) may also be prescribed. It is important that you take these as prescribed.

Common side effects of narcotic medications are nausea, drowsiness, and constipation. To decrease these potential side effects, take your medication with food. Consider taking Colace as directed on bottle to prevent constipation. As mentioned, we provide you with an anti-nausea medication that should also be taken as prescribed.

After the ketorolac is finished, you can supplement the narcotic medications with **200 mg or 400 mg of ibuprofen every 4-6 hours with food**. You can **alternate the ibuprofen with Tylenol 325 mg one to two tablets every 6 hours as needed**. Do not exceed more than 4000mg of Tylenol in 24 hours.

If you are having refractory nausea and vomiting, contact the office to possibly have your medication changed. **If you have any other problems taking the medications such as a rash, dark/tarry stools, abdominal pain, lightheadedness, or trouble breathing, please stop them immediately and notify the office**. You should resume your normal medications for other conditions the day after surgery as instructed by your PCP or specialists.

Sleeping/Activity

Be sure to use and move your hand, wrist, and elbow in order to decrease swelling in your arm. This will also help prevent stiffness. Patients are generally more comfortable sleeping or resting in a reclining chair or with pillows propped behind the shoulder and/or under the forearm. Difficulty with sleeping is common after surgery. Taking pain medication before bedtime will also assist in sleeping.

Do not engage in activities which increase pain/swelling over the first 14 days following surgery. Avoid long periods of sitting (without arm supported) or long distance traveling for 2 weeks. Avoid leaning on the arm and do not lift any weight with the involved arm.

Post-operative Appointment

Your first post-op appointment will be 7-10 days after surgery. This was already scheduled for you. If you have any questions or problems before your post-op visit, please feel free to contact the office at **518-489-2663**. We look forward to seeing you!