



Lee A. Kaback, MD
Shoulder and Elbow Surgery

Elbow Arthroscopy

POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

DAY OF SURGERY:

1. Use the sling for the first 24 hours.
2. Avoid resting on the arm and do not lift anything with the involved arm. If you had a nerve block you may be unable to move your arm or hand because of weakness and you may have numbness. This may last up to 12 to 18 hours. Do not touch a hot object or place your arm near a hot surface.
3. Take the pain medication as prescribed. In most cases, you will be prescribed an anti-inflammatory medication and a narcotic pain medication. You should take **both** of the medications as prescribed. A block is used during surgery and you may feel fine for the first 24 hours, however, it is still important to take your pain medication to stay ahead of the pain. You should start your pain medications when you get home. You should resume your normal medications for other conditions the day after your surgery.
4. Side effects of pain medication – nausea, drowsiness, and constipation. To decrease side effects take medications with food and consider taking Colace to prevent constipation.
5. Maintain your surgical dressing. **It is normal for some bleeding to occur.** If blood soaks through **do not become alarmed, reinforce with additional dressing.**

DAY 1:

1. _____ For **LATERAL** epicondylar release you can **remove your sling for range of motion and then reapply.** Please begin to flex and extend your elbow as tolerated. **No heavy lifting or gripping type of activities.** Move your fingers to prevent stiffness.
2. _____ For **MEDIAL** epicondylar release please wait until day 3 for ROM (see below).
3. Use a large ice pack to help relieve pain and reduce swelling (see icing directions.) Elevate your elbow above your heart level by supporting it on pillows.

DAY 3:

1. _____ For **LATERAL** epicondylar release you may **remove the bandage** and gauze from your elbow. The bandages you remove may be wet to the touch. This is normal as the elbow is filled with water during the surgery and it leaks out for 24-36 hours after the surgery. Your elbow may be swollen and black and blue, this is normal. **Keep steri-strips (white band-aids) on. Do not remove stitches.**
2. You may **begin to shower** with the wounds exposed after 72 hours then apply band-aids after shower. You should change your band-aids daily or as needed.



Lee A. Kaback, MD
Shoulder and Elbow Surgery

3. Keep your bandages and wounds dry. If the wounds do get wet, remove the band-aids, pat dry and reapply fresh band-aids. **Under no conditions should you use a tub, sauna, hot-tub, or swimming pool at this time.**
4. _____ For **MEDIAL** epicondylar release leave dressing on until see in office.
5. _____ For **MEDIAL** epicondylar release you may remove sling and perform some gentle elbow range of motion and reapply sling.

GENERAL INFORMATION

If at any time there are any concerns (**Increased swelling, redness, drainage from the incisions, warmth, fever, chills, or severe pain unrelieved by prescribed medications**) or if you have any questions contact the office at (518) 453-9088.

ICE THERAPY

Icing is very important for the first 10-14 days after surgery. Begin immediately after surgery. Use icing machine continuously or ice packs (if machine is not available) every 2 hours for 20 minutes daily until your first post-operative visit, remember to keep 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.

EATING

The anesthetic drugs used during your surgery may cause nausea for the first 24-48 hours. If you become nauseous, eat and drink only clear liquids (Sprite, Seltzer, Jello, clear soup broth.) The only solids should be crackers or toast. You may progress to your normal diet if you are not nauseated. You should have something to eat before taking your pain medication.

POST OPERATIVE APPOINTMENT

1. Your appointment should be 7-10 days after surgery for a **wound check**. A post-operative appointment has been made for _____ at _____ AM/PM, at our _____ office.
2. Your second appointment should be about 14 days after surgery for suture removal.