

SOHAIL SHAYFER MD, INC
Orthopedic Surgery, Hand Surgery, & Sports Medicine
Diplomate, American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery

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POST-OP ELBOW SURGERY

Things to remember

You have received anesthetic drugs, so for the next 24 hours:

1. You should not operate a vehicle.
2. You should not engage in any activity involving machinery or appliances.
3. You should not drink alcoholic beverages during the next 48 hours or as long as you are using narcotic medication.
4. Avoid making any critical decisions or signing any legal documents.

What to expect

You will awake to a cumbersome cast on your arm. The bottom of the cast is firm, and it is wrapped in padding and secured with flexible tape. This does take a little getting used to. Depending on your procedure you will find certain things very awkward. For example, ladies may find hooking a bra difficult; hook it in front, and then turn it around. Zippers will be challenging, but you will get there. Often it is your dominate arm that you have had surgery on. Try using your other arm the week prior to your surgery. With practice you will be successful. You may need someone to help cut your food, but you will be able to get the fork to your mouth, zip your trousers, and even apply make-up.

Medications:

It is normal to experience some pain in the operated body part as well as swelling in the entire arm, wrist, and perhaps your hand as well. You may also experience some numbness in the fingers that can last up to approximately 8 hours, due to the specific local anesthetic that was used in your procedure.

A prescription drug (narcotic) for pain control may have been prescribed. Take this as needed during the first day or so following your procedure. As your pain subsides, take less, or substitute Extra Strength Tylenol. Ultimately we want you off pain medication as soon as you are reasonably comfortable. Narcotic medication will cause constipation, therefore be certain to drink plenty of water. Eat fiber rich foods, and use an over the counter stool softener if your constipation is severe.

If an anti-inflammatory or antibiotic has been prescribed, you must take these medications until you have finished all of the medication, unless you have been instructed otherwise.

What to do:

Keep your arm **elevated above your heart**. You want your arm to be between your heart and the ceiling as much as possible. Pamper yourself; lie down on your sofa so that the affected arm is closest to the back of the sofa. Put a pillow on the back of your sofa, and **apply an ice pack, for 20 minutes, every two hours**. Frozen peas are ideal. This is just a little more flexible and melds to your arm more easily. And you simply refreeze the peas for the next application. Ice should be used for the **ten days**.

When using ice packs, or frozen peas, put a dish towel between you and the ice. Ice should not be applied directly to the skin.

When you are walking around keep your arm in the sling you have been given. When you sit or lay down, be certain to prop your arm on pillows so it stays elevated. By elevating your arm, and applying ice, you will decrease and minimize the swelling in your extremity which diminishes your pain, and lessens the chances of stiffness and scar tissue formation.

Bathing

You may shower or tub the day following your procedure. Keep your dressing clean and dry. When taking a shower, wrap a towel proximal to the dressing and cover the whole thing with a trash bag. First, cover your arm, covered by the towel, into the trash bag, and put a rubber band about 2 inches above the dressing. Then take the trash bag back over the dressing and put a rubber band at BOTH ENDS of the covering. Your wound will remain dry. Of course you should avoid putting your arm into the tub or directly under the shower flow.

Discharge Information

If you have problems relating to your surgery or develop any of the following: fever over 101, chills, heavy bleeding, inability to urinate after adequate fluid intake or any unusual occurrence, call Dr. Shayfer at 818.981.3688 or call Specialty Surgical Center ("SSC"), Monday through Friday between 7:00 am and 4:00 pm. If you are unable to reach the office or SSC you should go to the nearest Emergency Room. For extreme emergencies, dial 911.

Make an appointment to be seen in the office in 10-12 days for the suture removal unless we have instructed you differently. 818.981.3688

Now relax, take good care of yourself, eat, drink fluids and we will see you in the office in about 10-12 days.