



Dr. Kelly Elbow Arthroscopy Postoperative Instructions

DIET

- Begin with clear liquids and light foods (jello, soups, etc.)
- Progress to your normal diet if you are not nauseated

WOUND CARE

- Maintain your operative dressing, loosen bandage if swelling of the elbow, wrist, or hand occurs.
- It is normal for the elbow to bleed and swell following surgery – if blood soaks onto the bandage, do not become alarmed – reinforce with additional dressing.
- Remove surgical dressing on the second post-operative day – if minimal drainage is present, apply waterproof band-aids over incisions and change daily.
- To avoid infection, keep surgical incisions clean and dry – you may shower by placing waterproof band-aids over incision areas. Please remember to change band-aids daily.
- NO immersion of operative arm (i.e. bath).

MEDICATIONS

Do not drive a car or operate machinery while taking narcotic pain medication

- Pain medication is injected into the wound and shoulder joint during surgery – this will wear off within 8-12 hours.
- Most patients will require some narcotic pain medication for a short period of time.
- Primary pain medication = Percocet (oxycodone) or Norco (hydrocodone)
 - Take 1 – 2 tablets every 4 – 6 hours as needed
 - Max of 12 pills per day
 - Plan on using it for 2 to 5 days, depending on your level of pain
 - Do NOT take additional Tylenol (Acetaminophen) while taking Percocet or Norco
- Common side effects of the pain medication are nausea, drowsiness, and constipation – to decrease the side effects, take medication with food.

- If constipation occurs, consider taking an over-the-counter laxative such as prune juice, Senekot, Colace, or Miralax.
- If you are having problems with nausea and vomiting, contact the office to possibly have your medication changed.
- For nausea, take the prescribed Zofran/Phenergan.
- Ibuprofen 600-800mg (i.e. Advil) may be taken in between the narcotic pain medication to reduce the overall amount of pain medication required and increase the time intervals between narcotic pain medication usage.

ACTIVITY

- Your sling should be worn for comfort only and removed for exercises and hygiene
- You may remove for gentle range of motion exercises of the shoulder, elbow, wrist, and hand
- When sleeping or resting, inclined positions (i.e. reclining chair) and a pillow under the forearm for support may provide better comfort.
- Do not engage in activities which increase pain/swelling (shoulder/elbow/wrist activity or repetitive lifting) over the first 7-10 days following surgery.
- Avoid long periods of sitting (without arm supported) or long distance traveling for 2 weeks.
- NO driving until instructed otherwise by a physician.
- May return to sedentary work or school 3-4 days after surgery, if pain is tolerable.

ICE THERAPY

- Begin immediately after surgery.
- Use the ice wrap (if machine not prescribed) every 2 hours for 20 minutes daily until your first post-operative visit – remember to keep the arm supported while icing.

EXERCISE

- You may begin gentle shoulder, elbow, wrist and hand range of motion when comfortable after surgery.
- Formal physical therapy (PT) will begin after your first post-operative visit.

*****EMERGENCIES*****

Contact Dr. Kelly or his PA if any of the following are present:

- Painful swelling or numbness
- Unrelenting pain

- Fever (over 101° – it is normal to have a low grade fever for the first day or two following surgery) or chills
- Redness around incisions
- Color change in wrist, hand or lower extremity
- Continuous drainage or bleeding from incision (a small amount of drainage is expected)
- Difficulty breathing
- Excessive nausea/vomiting

***If you have an emergency after office hours or on the weekend, call **412-262-7800** and you will be connected to our page service – they will contact Dr. Kelly or one of his partners if he is unavailable. Do NOT call the hospital or surgery center.

*****If you have an emergency that requires immediate attention, proceed to the nearest emergency room.**

FOLLOW UP CARE

- Dr. Kelly or his PA will call you on your first day after surgery to address any questions or concerns. If you have not been contacted within 48 hours of surgery, please call the office.
- If you do not already have a postoperative appointment scheduled, please contact the scheduling office during normal office hours (412-231-9272).
- This web site also includes more postoperative information for specific procedures, which may be helpful for your recovery: [**www.BrianKellyMD.com**](http://www.BrianKellyMD.com)