

Post-Operative Follow-Up & Frequently Asked Questions

How to Contact Our Office

Please call with questions or concerns. Our office staff is happy to assist you.

- Messages requiring provider input are typically returned within 1–2 business days
- Please allow up to 3 business days for medication refill requests

Center for Bone and Joint Disease

- Hudson Office: (727) 697-2200
- Brooksville Office: (352) 596-0900

When Should I Call the Office vs. Go to the Emergency Room?

We are unable to diagnose or treat medical emergencies over the phone.

Go to the nearest emergency room immediately if you experience:

- Severe or worsening pain not controlled by medication
- Chest pain or shortness of breath

- **Fever, chills, or signs of infection**
- **Uncontrolled bleeding**
- **New numbness or weakness**
- **Any condition you believe may be an emergency**

If possible, we recommend Bayonet Point Medical Center.

For non-emergent concerns, please call our office during regular business hours to schedule an appointment.

Pain Medication & Narcotic Prescribing Policy

Florida law limits narcotic pain medication prescriptions for acute injuries to one week at a time.

- **Opioid medications may be used early after surgery but will be tapered as quickly as possible**
- **Narcotic prescriptions are generally limited to 4 weeks post-operatively**
- **This approach reduces side effects, dependence, and long-term complications**

If pain becomes a chronic issue, alternative treatment strategies or referral to a pain management specialist may be recommended.

Go to the emergency room if pain becomes severe and cannot be controlled with prescribed or over-the-counter medications.

For refill requests:

- Call during regular business hours
- Allow up to 3 business days for review and processing

Pain Control: What Can I Take Besides Narcotics?

Your prescriptions are sent electronically to your pharmacy upon discharge.

Unless contraindicated, we recommend over-the-counter medications as first-line pain control, using narcotics only for breakthrough pain.

Typical dosing (if approved by your physician):

- Acetaminophen (Tylenol): up to 1000 mg every 8 hours
- Ibuprofen: up to 800 mg every 8 hours
- These medications should be alternated, not taken together

Example schedule:

- 6:00 AM – Acetaminophen 1000 mg
- 10:00 AM – Ibuprofen 800 mg
- 2:00 PM – Acetaminophen 1000 mg
- 6:00 PM – Ibuprofen 800 mg

Do not exceed 4000 mg (4 grams) of acetaminophen in 24 hours.

Some prescription pain medications contain acetaminophen—please account for this.

If you have liver, kidney, stomach, or bleeding conditions, confirm medication safety with your primary care physician.

Follow-Up Appointment Scheduling

If your post-operative appointment was not scheduled before discharge, you will receive paperwork with your surgeon's name and the recommended time frame.

- **Most follow-up visits occur approximately 2 weeks after surgery, unless otherwise specified**
- **Please call during regular business hours to schedule**

Clinic locations:

- **Hudson Office: Thursdays**
- **Brooksville Office: Monday afternoons**

Weight-Bearing and Activity Restrictions

Your weight-bearing and activity restrictions are specific to your injury and surgery.

- **Follow the instructions provided by your surgeon**
- **Do not advance weight bearing or activity unless explicitly directed**
- **Advancing activity too early can result in complications or fixation failure**

Dressing and Wound Care

Follow the discharge instructions provided at the hospital.

- **In most cases, original post-operative dressings or splints should remain in place until your follow-up visit**
- **If a dressing falls off or is changed:**
 - **Cover the incision with 4×4 gauze and tape**
 - **Supplies are available at most pharmacies**

Showering and Bathing

Unless otherwise instructed:

- **Showering is allowed**
- **Splints and casts must be kept dry using waterproof coverings**
- **Dressings should remain covered and protected**

After sutures or staples are removed:

- **Do not submerge incisions (no bathtubs, hot tubs, or swimming pools)**
- **Do not apply ointments, creams, or lotions**
- **Complete healing may take 4 weeks or longer**

Signs and Symptoms to Monitor

Some mild bleeding or drainage may be normal early after surgery.

Call the office or go to the emergency room if you notice:

- **Persistent or worsening bleeding**
- **Increasing redness, warmth, or swelling**
- **New or worsening drainage**
- **Incision opening**
- **Fever or chills**

Blood Clot (DVT) Warning Signs

Go to the emergency room immediately for:

- **New calf or thigh pain**
- **Swelling, redness, or warmth in the leg**
- **Chest pain or shortness of breath**

These symptoms may indicate a blood clot and require urgent evaluation.

Physical Therapy

Formal outpatient physical therapy is usually not started for at least the first 2 weeks following injury or surgery.

- **The need for therapy will be determined at your follow-up visit**
- **Continue any home exercise program provided during hospitalization if applicable**

Suture or Staple Removal

- **Sutures or staples are typically removed at your 2-week follow-up visit**
- **If you remain hospitalized or in a rehabilitation facility, removal may occur there unless otherwise specified**

Driving Restrictions

- **Do not drive while taking narcotic pain medications**
- **Do not drive if your injury or surgery affects your ability to safely operate a vehicle**
- **Driving restrictions will be reviewed at your follow-up appointment**

Smoking and Nicotine Use

Smoking and nicotine use significantly increase the risk of:

- **Delayed bone healing**

- Infection
- Wound complications
- Fixation failure

Complete avoidance of nicotine products is strongly recommended during recovery.

Paperwork (Work, FMLA, Disability, Insurance)

If paperwork is required, please notify the office as soon as possible.

- Once received, allow 10–14 business days for completion
- Includes work notes, FMLA forms, disability paperwork, and insurance documentation

After-Hours Concerns

For urgent concerns after hours, please go to the emergency room.

Non-urgent messages will be addressed during the next business day.