

## **POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS ELBOW SURGERY**

### **MEDICATION**

- After surgery you will be prescribed pain medication: Norco (hydrocodone), Percocet (oxycodone), or Tramadol will be prescribed to you. Take as instructed and as needed.
  - Pain medication may cause constipation. You may take an over the counter stool softener (Colace, Senekot, etc) to help prevent this problem.
  - You should take these medicines with food or they may nauseate you.
  - You may not drive or operate heavy equipment while on narcotics.
  - Pain medication is refilled on an individual basis and only during office hours.
- If you have a nerve block, **DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE BLOCK COMPLETELEY WEARS OFF.**
  - Most patients find it helpful to take two pills 8-10 hours after surgery and scheduling two pills every four to six hours the first night and morning after and then gradually wean off as tolerated.
- Try to avoid anti-inflammatories such as Ibuprofen or Naproxen for at least six weeks after surgery as this may impair tissue healing.
- Resume all home medications unless otherwise instructed.
- Call the office if you are having an adverse reaction to the medicine.

### **WOUND CARE**

- If you are in a splint, do not remove or unwrap bandages.
- If you are in a soft bandage, you may remove them on the second day after surgery unless otherwise instructed. Do not remove steri-strips (tape pieces).
- The incisions may not get wet until after your first post-operative visit. Place a garbage bag over your elbow or use plastic wrap to shower or take a sponge bath while your dressings are on.
- **NO** submersion of wounds (bath, hot tub, pool) is recommended for a minimum of 2 weeks after surgery.

### **ACTIVITY**

- Depending on your surgery, certain restrictions may apply which will be addressed at your first visit or in therapy.

### **SLING**

- Remain in sling at all times unless otherwise instructed.

### **SLEEP**

- Nighttime will probably be the most uncomfortable time.
- Sleeping in a reclined chair or propped up on a pile of pillows may aid in sleeping.
- Sleep in your sling or brace until instructed otherwise.

### **COLD THERAPY**

- Ice should be used to assist in pain and swelling. Do not apply directly to exposed skin. Try to ice 20- 30 minutes every 3-4 hours if possible.
- A simple bag of frozen peas may be used as an inexpensive ice pack. Buy several bags of peas, place in a gallon size zip-lock bag making them about an inch thick and removing as much air as possible. Return to freezer, lying flat when done.

### **EMERGENCIES**

- If you have an emergency contact Dr. Toole's office.
- Contact the office if you notice any of the following:
  - Uncontrolled nausea or vomiting, reaction to medication, inability to urinate, fever greater than 101.5 (low grade fever 1-2 days after surgery is normal), severe pain not relieved by pain medication, redness or continued drainage around incisions (a small amount is normal).
- **If you are having chest pain or difficulty breathing, call 911 or go to the closest emergency room.**

### **FOLLOW UP APPOINTMENT**

- Please make your first post-op visit 7 days after surgery if not scheduled. Your first visit will usually already be scheduled for you.
- **If you have any questions, please call the office.**