

Gordon Groh MD, MBA Post Discharge Protocol

Hand/Wrist/Distal Radius Fracture Office 828 252 7331

Pain

- Over 90% of patients take narcotics for less than two weeks after surgery
- Take over the counter Tylenol 325 tablets
 - 2 tablets every 6 hours
- If prescribed Gabapentin—take every 8 hours as directed
- If prescribed an anti-inflammatory such as Celebrex—take daily as directed
- Take Oxycodone as needed for pain—begin as block begins to wear off or prior to first night sleep. Expect soreness for the first 3 days after surgery

Dressing Change

- Leave dressings and splint in place until first postoperative appointment in approximately three weeks after surgery

Bathing

- You may shower as desired after surgery—however the splint is plaster and will disintegrate if made wet. Elevate above shoulder height in shower and double bag with plastic bags to protect splint
- Keep splint clean and dry

Sling

- Wear the sling full time until block has resolved. After block has resolved may wear as needed—however splints keep hand in a dependent position and may worsen swelling

Driving

- May contemplate driving if patient feels safe 1-3 days after surgery. Patient must be off all narcotic pain medications
- Patient must feel comfortable handling vehicle in emergency situations

Hand Therapy

- Begin work on making a full composite fist immediately after surgery. Once you can make a fist, you may work on hand strength by squeezing a ball.
- Hand therapy begins two to six weeks after surgery depending upon surgical findings
- Some patients may be able to complete utilizing only home therapy

Constipation

- Take over the counter MiraLAX and Senna (over the counter) twice per day while using narcotic pain medications.
- Take Colace as directed (prescription) while taking narcotic pain medications.

Swelling & Edema management

- Some swelling/edema is normal in the forearm/hand after surgery—although the amount can be variable
- Making a fist and squeezing a ball repeatedly during the day improves blood return and decreases swelling
- Elevate hand above the level of heart

Bruising/Discoloration in arm after Surgery

- Normal after surgery and blood thinners including aspirin/anti-inflammatory medications may increase bruising

Staple/Suture Removal

- Staples/sutures may be removed at the 14 days recheck if the wound appears to be healing with minimal swelling. Steri-strips are applied after staple removal and should stay in place until approximately 3 days after suture removal

Anti-Coagulation

- Aspirin 325 mg per day or Xarelto/Coumadin only for higher risk patients—typical duration four weeks—if indicated

CHG/Pre-operative Wash

- All total shoulder patients will receive a CHG sponge and should wash with it the night prior to surgery

Dental Precautions

- No delays indicated for elective dental procedures.