

Postoperative Instructions: Wrist Fracture Surgery

When You Get Home:

Rest for the remainder of the day.

Be Safe- stay in the care of responsible adult the first 24 hours.

Elevate the arm on one to two pillows for the first 2 days.

Use Ice as much as possible:

20 minutes on/20 minutes off for regular ice packs/frozen peas, with a towel or cloth between you and the Ice
If you are using a Cold Therapy unit, use it according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Pain Medication:

Take your pain medication- it's better to stay ahead of the pain.

Oral Narcotic pain medicines (Vicodin/Hydrocodone, Percocet, Tramadol, Codeine) help with pain, but can cause:

Drowsiness: Be Safe, don't drive, operate machinery, don't mix it with alcohol.

Stomach upset: Take with food, or try over the counter Zantac or Tums.

Constipation: Drink enough fluids, use fiber supplements (Metamucil, Senokot)

Take Prune juice or Milk of Magnesia if still constipated after 2 days

You may take anti-inflammatory medication to help with pain and swelling.

Some patients are prescribed Toradol (Ketorolac): take every 6 hours for 4 days.

Ok to take with Pain Medications, not with other anti-inflammatories

After 4 days of Toradol, you can take other anti-inflammatory medicines like:

Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), Naproxen (Aleve), Lodine, Mobic, Celebrex

Go easy on the anti-inflammatory medications if you have stomach problems.

Splint and Wound Care:

You will be in a postoperative splint for the first week.

The sling helps support the arm, and keeps it elevated to help with swelling.

Keep the postoperative splint clean and dry.

You may take a shower, but use a heavy plastic bag and tap the top around the arm to keep water from getting in.

Use a shower chair or plastic shower chair to sit on in the shower.

At your first postoperative visit we will remove the splint and remove your sutures.

Exercises: Begin exercises immediately:

Move your thumb and fingers around many times during the day

Physical therapy will give you gentle exercises starting several weeks after surgery.

Activities and Restrictions:

You'll be getting around your house well within a few days.

Resume light activities (walking, etc.) after a few days.

You need to limit any heavy activities to allow the surgery and incision to heal.

Driving: Only after you are SAFE, which means:

Off pain medications, and able to control a vehicle safely

It can be difficult to control a car with one arm in a sling or splint.

Problems or Questions? Call us at 925.600.7020

Feel free to call us if you have any concerns, or for:

Unrelenting pain, or increasing swelling or numbness or high fevers (over 101.5)

Continuous drainage or bleeding that is soaking your dressing

Chest pain, shortness of breath