

Postoperative Instructions: Elbow Ulnar Nerve Decompression

When You Get Home:

Rest for the remainder of the day.

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

Use Ice as much as possible: It may not fully cool the elbow below the splint, but it is still beneficial.

20 minutes on/20 minutes off for regular ice packs/frozen peas

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, Percocet, Ultram, Codeine) help with pain, but can cause:

Drowsiness:

Be Safe, don't drive, operative 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.

Dressing and Wound Care:

You will be in a sling and splint for the first week- Keep the postoperative splint clean and dry.

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

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

Feeling/sensation: You may feel some increased tingling in the hand after surgery, as the nerve starts to heal.

This is normal. If the tingling becomes severe or is very painful, please give us a call.

Activities and Restrictions:

Sling: You will be in a sling and splint for the first week after surgery.

At your first postop visit we will remove the splint and remove your suture.

We will plan to remove the splint at your first postop visit, and then you can start gently moving the elbow.

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

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

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.

Exercises: Begin exercises immediately:

Move your thumb and fingers around many times during the day

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

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