



## ***Post Operative Instructions: Distal Radius Fracture ORIF***

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### **ACTIVITY**

- **You may NOT bear weight with your affected arm until cleared by your physician.**
- You should move (straighten and bend) your fingers at least 10 times per day within your comfort zone to decrease swelling and prevent stiffness.
- You may move your shoulder (raise it overhead) and elbow (bend and straighten) within your comfort zone to decrease swelling and prevent stiffness.
- You may be able to do some typing or writing right after surgery. But swelling or stiffness may make it hard to do these things for 3 to 4 weeks after surgery.

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### **DRESSING & INCISIONS**

- A small amount of red-tinged drainage on the dressing during the first 2 days is normal.
- Keep the dressing clean and dry; protect it while bathing or showering.
- Remove the dressing 4 days after surgery.
- You may apply Band-Aids to the incisions or leave them open to air.
- Do not apply Bacitracin or other ointments.
- Avoid soaking in pools, lakes, hot tubs, or the ocean until sutures are removed and the incision is fully healed.

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### **PAIN & INFLAMMATION**

#### **Ice**

- Apply ice wrapped in a dry towel 20 minutes at a time, several times per day for the first week, then as needed.

**Elevation** - Keep your arm elevated above your heart as much as possible for the first 3 to 4 days.

#### **Pain Medications**

- Take your prescribed medications as directed.

#### **Tylenol (Acetaminophen)**

- First-line for pain.
- Take 1000 mg every 6–8 hours.
- Do not exceed 1000 mg per dose or 4000 mg per day (limit to 3000 mg/day if you have liver issues).
- Do not drink alcohol while taking Tylenol.

#### **Oxycodone**

- For moderate to severe breakthrough pain only.
- Use sparingly and wean off as soon as possible.

#### **Common side effects include:**

- Nausea: Take with food.
- Drowsiness: Do not drive or operate machinery.
- Itching: Benadryl may help.

- Constipation:
  - Use stool softeners (e.g., Senna-Docusate) or OTC options (Mineral Oil, Milk of Magnesia, etc).
  - Avoid bananas, rice, apples, toast, and yogurt (may worsen constipation).
  - Light walking helps stimulate bowel function.

Refills:

- If you think you will need a refill, you must request it during regular weekday office hours.

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## EMERGENCIES

You must have someone stay with you during the first 48 hours after surgery.

Call the clinic or the on-call orthopedist if:

- Drainage soaks the dressing, increases, smells foul, or if incisions become red, warm, or very painful.
- You develop a fever  $>101.5^{\circ}\text{F}$  or chills.
- You experience leg or calf pain, swelling, or difficulty breathing.

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## FOLLOW-UP CARE

- Schedule a follow-up appointment at ~2 weeks postoperatively for a wound check, suture removal, and review of your surgery (if not already scheduled).
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