



### POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS: ELBOW FRACTURE

#### ACTIVITY

- You **may not bear weight** on the operated arm (lean on arm, push off of a surface, carry objects greater than 5 pounds) until permitted by your surgeon.

#### SPLINT & SLING

- Keep the splint on at all times, we will remove this during your visit to the clinic.
- You may remove the sling as much as you would like, it is just for your comfort.

#### PAIN & INFLAMMATION

- **Ice** - Apply ice bags wrapped in a dry towel several times per day for 20 minutes for the first week and then as needed for pain relief and inflammation.
- **Elevation** - You may notice that your fingers will get swollen if your arm is hanging by your side for long periods of time, therefore keep your arm **elevated above your heart** as much as possible for the first 2 to 3 days.
- **Pain Medication**- You have been given a prescription for pain control; please take as directed.
  - If you think you will require a refill on your medication, you **MUST** do so during our regular **weekday** office hours.
  - If you need additional pain medication you may take Tylenol 500-650mg every 4-6 hours. Do not take more than 3grams or 3000mg in a 24 hour period!
  - Common side effects of the pain medication are:
    - **NAUSEA:** To decrease nausea, take these medications with food.
    - **DROWSINESS:** Do not drive a car or operate machinery.
    - **ITCHING:** You may take Benadryl to alleviate any itching.
    - **CONSTIPATION:** To decrease constipation, use the stool softener provided (Docusate 250mg) or over-the-counter remedies (Mineral Oil, Milk of Magnesia, etc). Also avoid bananas, rice, apples, toast, or yogurt...as these foods can make you constipated. Getting up and moving around also helps with constipation and "waking up" your intestinal tract.
- Anti-inflammatory medications (Aleve, Ibuprofen, Naproxen, etc.) should **not** be taken for 2 weeks after surgery.

#### EMERGENCIES

- Please have someone stay with you for the first 24 hours after surgery
- Please call the clinic or the orthopaedist on-call if:
  - Drainage from the incision soaks the dressings, expands, is foul-smelling; or your incisions are red, warm, and extremely painful
  - You develop a fever (>101.5°) or chills.
  - You experience leg or calf pain, leg swelling, or difficulty breathing.

#### FOLLOW-UP CARE

- Please **schedule a follow-up visit** for suture removal, and to review your surgery 10-14 days postoperatively.

**IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CALL THE OFFICE (760)924-4084.**

## EXERCISES

●Once your pain is controlled and you feel comfortable, you may perform the following exercises (**10 reps each, three times daily**). It will help you to take your pain medication 20 to 30 minutes prior to the exercises:

1. **Grip strengthening:** With the arm in the sling, grip a rubber ball, old tennis ball, or beanbag. Hold for 5 seconds and release.
2. **Shoulder shrugs:** Shrug your shoulders up towards your ears and hold for 10 seconds.
3. **Pendulum:** Lean forward and hang your arm down towards the floor. Trace small letters of the alphabet with your finger on the floor. The arm movements must be **PASSIVE!** (Do not use your muscles to lift/move the arm). Make the letters bigger daily by a small amount. (Shoot for 45 degrees of forward motion and 45 degrees of sideways motion **PASSIVELY**).