



Post Operative Instructions: Radius Fracture ORIF

ACTIVITY/SPLINT

- **No weight bearing with your operative arm until permitted by your surgeon.**
- **Keep the splint clean, dry, and in place at all times. Do not get the splint wet.**
- If you are going to shower, please protect the splint with a garbage bag, Saran wrap, etc in order to keep it dry.
- Do not stick items down your splint, even if it itches underneath. If you have itching you can “knock” on the splint. The vibration from the knock can typically alleviate the itch.
- Your splint will be removed at your first postoperative clinic appointment and you will be transitioned into a custom thermoplastic splint. If you are feeling significant pressure points in your splint prior to this visit, please inform Dr. Williamson’s care team.
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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.

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 operative wrist/hand **elevated above your heart** as much as possible for the first 7 days. It is normal for your fingers to swell in the days following surgery.

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.

Methocarbamol

- Helps with pain and muscle spasms.
- Take every 6 hours as needed.

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.

Vitamin C: 500mg twice daily x 60 days to prevent development of complex regional pain syndrome

Refills:

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

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.

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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