



### POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS: PROXIMAL HUMERUS FRACTURE FIXATION

#### ACTIVITY

- DO NOT ATTEMPT TO LIFT YOUR ARM OR REACH IN ANY DIRECTION (forward, to the side, or behind you) UNTIL GIVEN PERMISSION BY YOUR PHYSICIAN.

#### SLING

- Please wear the sling while sleeping until your first postoperative visit.
- We would like you to remove the sling 2-3 times a day to bend your elbow and wrist (refer to next page). Please do not move your elbow away from your side.
- When the sling is off you may sponge bathe your under arm and let it dry for hygiene.

#### DRESSINGS & INCISIONS

- The first two days after surgery you can expect a small amount of red-tinged drainage on your dressings. This is normal.
- Please keep the dressing clean and dry; if you are going to shower/bathe, you must protect the dressing. You may not swim in a pool, lake, hot tub, or the ocean until after follow up visit.
- You may remove the dressing 4 days after surgery (plastic dressing and white gauze pads).
- Leave the glue in place, leave open to air
- Please do not use Bacitracin® or other ointments on the incisions.

#### 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.
- **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.
- In most cases you will start therapy and begin shoulder motion after that visit.

**IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CALL THE OFFICE.**

## EXERCISES

You may perform the following exercises (**10-15 reps each, 2-3 times daily**) out of the sling. It will help you to take your pain medication 20 to 30 minutes prior to the exercises:

- 1. Elbow range of motion:** With your arm bent at the elbow and against your body as if it were still in the sling, bend and straighten your elbow as if you were brushing something off of the front of your pants.



- 2. Grip strengthening:** With the arm in the sling, grip a rubber ball or old tennis ball. Hold for 5 seconds and release.
- 3. Wrist rotation:** Turn your palm to face up toward the ceiling and hold for 5 - 10 seconds. Then turn the palm to face the floor and hold again. Bend your wrist
- 4. 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.