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**MIDWEST
ORTHOPAEDICS
AT RUSH**

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POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS ELBOW ARTHROSCOPY

****Please note that the instructions provided below are general guidelines to be followed; however, any written or verbal instructions provided by Dr. Verma or the Physician Assistants supersedes the instructions below and should be followed.**

DIET

- Begin with clear liquids and light foods (jello, soups, etc.)
- Progress to your normal diet if you are not nauseated

WOUND CARE

- Maintain your operative dressing, loosen bandage if swelling of the hand occurs
- It is normal for the elbow to bleed and swell following surgery. If blood soaks through the bandage, do not become alarmed, reinforce with additional dressing
- To avoid infection, keep surgical incisions clean and dry.
- You may remove the soft dressing and shower beginning **3 days after surgery**. NO immersion of the arm. Use gentle soap and water in the shower. Please do not apply lotions, creams or ointments. May apply band aids after dressing is removed.

MEDICATIONS.

- Most patients will require some narcotic pain medication for a short period of time – this can be taken as per directions on the bottle.
- Common side effects of the pain medication are nausea, drowsiness, and constipation. To decrease the side effects take the medication with food. If constipation occurs, consider taking an over the counter laxative.
- If you are having problems with nausea and vomiting, contact the office to possibly have your medications changed.
- Do not drive a car or operate machinery while taking the narcotic medication
- If you are having pain that is not being controlled by the pain medication prescribed, you may take an over the counter anti-inflammatory medication such as ibuprofen in between doses of pain medication. This will help to decrease pain and decrease the amount of narcotic medication required. Please take as directed on the bottle. Please do not take additional Tylenol or Acetaminophen because the prescribed pain medication contains acetaminophen.
- For 2 weeks following surgery take one 81mg aspirin twice daily to lower the risk of developing a blood clot after surgery. Please contact the office should severe distal arm pain occur or significant swelling of the distal arm/hand occur.

ACTIVITY

- When sleeping or resting, inclined positions (ie: reclining chair) and a pillow under the forearm for support may provide better comfort.
- Do not engage in activities which increase pain/swelling.
- The sling should be worn for 1-2 days, then as needed for comfort unless directed otherwise.
- Avoid long periods of sitting or long distance traveling for 2 weeks.
- NO driving until instructed otherwise by physician
- May return to sedentary work ONLY or school 3-4 days after surgery, if pain is tolerable

ICE THERAPY

- Icing is very important in the initial post-operative period and should begin immediately after surgery.
- Use icing machine continuously or ice packs (if machine not prescribed) until your first post-operative visit.
- Care should be taken with icing to avoid frostbite to the skin.

EXERCISE

- Begin finger flexion and extension on the first post-operative day to help decrease swelling.
- Formal physical therapy (PT) or occupational therapy (OT) depending on where your therapy is done begins 3-7 days postop depending on your procedure. A prescription and protocol will be provided to you. Please see your surgical binder for a list of Midwest Orthopaedics at RUSH therapy locations.

EMERGENCIES**

- Contact Dr. Verma's PAs at Vermapa@rushortho.com if you experience any
 - Painful swelling or numbness (note that some swelling and numbness is normal)
 - Unrelenting pain
 - Fever (over 101° - it is normal to have a low grade fever for the first day or two following surgery) or chills
 - Redness around incisions
 - Color change in distal arm and/or hand
 - Continuous drainage or bleeding from incision (a small amount of drainage is expected)
 - Difficulty breathing
 - Excessive nausea/vomiting
 - Calf pain
- The PAs are available by email during business hours (M-F 8 am – 5pm)
- If you have an emergency **after office hours** or **on the weekend**, contact the office at 312-432-2390 and you will be connected to our pager service. Press 0 and this will connect you with the Physician on call. You can also call Rush University Medical Center at **312-942-5000** and ask for the operator to page the orthopedic resident on call.
- If you have an emergency that requires immediate attention proceed to the nearest emergency room.

FOLLOW-UP CARE/QUESTIONS

- If you do not already have a post-operative appointment scheduled, please contact our scheduler at 708-236-2701 to schedule.
- Typically the first post-operative appointment following surgery is 7-10 days following surgery
- The first post operative appointment will be with one of the Physician Assistants. They will assess the wound, go over post operative protocol, and answer any questions you may have regarding the procedure
- If you have any further questions please contact the PAs directly at Vermapa@rushortho.com