



**You have been recently scheduled for surgery with Dr. David J. Gerlach.
This information is to ensure you are prepared for surgery and after surgery.**

Patients Name: _____

Date of Surgery: _____ (Hospital will call you 2-3 days before surgery with your time)

Location of Surgery: _____

Procedure: _____

Anesthesia: _____

- You must schedule a preoperative physical with your family doctor within 1-30 days of surgery.
- Arrange for a driver to drive you home from surgery.
- No food or beverage after Midnight prior to surgery.
- Post op appointment is scheduled for: _____
- Please avoid aspirin products 7-10 days prior to surgery.

Post Operative Instructions

General:

- Elevate! Elevate! Elevate! Extremity to prevent swelling. For 2-3 days postoperatively elevate the extremity above the level of your heart to reduce swelling.
- Apply ice to the extremity 3-4 times a day (20 minutes on/20 minutes off) for 3-4 days or until the swelling subsides. If you are in a splint, apply ice on the top of the splint.
- Breathing exercises; Cough and deep breathe 5 times an hour for 2-3 days.
- If you are experiencing any of the following call our office or the doctor on call immediately.
 - Fever greater than 101°F, chills
 - Excessive redness, swelling or drainage from incisions

Medications:

- You will be discharged with a prescription for pain medicine. Let us know in advance if you are running low. Refills are NOT handled on the weekend or after hours.
- You may use Tylenol instead of the pain medication for milder pain, or you can supplement the prescribed medication with Ibuprofen 600mg every 6 hours or Naproxen 440mg every 12 hours. DO NOT take Tylenol with your pain medication.
- Pain medication can be constipating. You may use an over-the-counter laxative or stool softener (Colace, Metamucil, etc...) as needed until your bowel function returns to normal.
- You may resume your preoperative medications.

Wound Care:

- Keep your incision dry in the shower. You may bathe and keep your extremity out of the water or shower and cover it with Saran wrap or a sealed plastic bag.
- DO NOT change your dressing! This will be done at the office or you will have specific orders on your discharge paperwork you receive after surgery. Keep your cast or dressing dry. If you need to shower protect it with a plastic bag. Place bag over cast and tape it closed, cover the tape with a towel, and cover the first bag with a towel or another bag and tape this closed above the towel.
- Do not use any ointment or lotions on your incision.

Follow up appointment: Please make sure your post op appointment is made according to your discharge orders from surgery. If you have any questions please call my office.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q- May I drive?

A- You may not drive for 24 hours after your operation or while on narcotic pain medication.

Q- What/when can I eat?

A- We suggest that you eat lightly the first 24 hours after surgery. Try to drink ample amounts of clear liquids.

Q- When can I resume my regular medications?

A- You may resume your medications when you get home, unless otherwise instructed by the doctor or on your discharge papers.

Q- What is an adverse reaction to a pain medication?

A- Rash, itching, dizziness, nausea/vomiting, and/or constipation may be adverse reactions to your pain medication. Call your doctor's office if these problems occur.

Q- May I drink alcohol?

A- You may not drink alcohol for the 24 hour period following surgery, nor are you allowed to drink alcohol while taking narcotic pain medication.

Q- How much pain should I expect?

A- Everyone will experience different amounts of pain, but following your surgery, you can expect to feel pain after the numbing medicine has worn off. This will probably last at least several days but should gradually improve. Remember to elevate your extremity above the level of your heart, modify your activities, keep up on your pain medication, and ice the surgical extremity.

Q- When should I take my pain medication?

A- Pain medicine should be taken only as directed by your physician. Begin pain medication before the pain gets out of control, as it takes 30-45 minutes for it to take effect. Remember, pain medication is designed to make the pain tolerable, not to fully take it away. Pain medication may produce some loss of judgment and coordination; therefore, it is best to limit your activities until the effects wear off.

Sometimes pain medication can cause nausea and constipation. You may use over the counter treatment for this. To avoid nausea, we recommend that you eat something before taking your pain medication. To avoid constipation, increase your fluid intake, and you may use an over the counter stool softener or laxative.

Q- When should I expect to return to work?

A- You may return to sedentary (sit down) work or school 2-3 days after surgery if your pain is tolerable. Return to heavy labor or excessive ambulatory activities will be determined by your physician.

Q- How can I get my disability /FMLA paperwork filled out?

A- Please drop off at our Coon Rapids or Otsego office or fax to 763-241-8179 Attn: Candice. **DO NOT bring forms with you to surgery.** Allow 1-2 weeks for these forms to be filled out and submitted.

Depending on the procedure that was/will be performed, you should...

- ✓ Wear the splint/cast for _____ As instructed on your discharge paperwork
- ✓ Range of motion/weightbearing limitations _____ As instructed on your discharge paperwork
- ✓ Occupational (hand) therapy may begin _____ When Dr. Gerlach has instructed

If you have problems after surgery concerning your incision, pain/swelling/numbness/tingling, cast/splint, your dressings and/or therapy questions please contact Lisa S. If you have concerns about paperwork, medication refills, or any other questions please contact Candice at 763-441-0298.