

## **Surgery General Postoperative Instructions**

**Activities:** Following surgery, patients may require a sling, crutches, or walker. If needed, a PT Protocol will be provided to you.

You will be initially non-weightbearing for most fracture fixation (besides the hip, femur, or tibia). Most elbow surgeries will also initially be non-weightbearing. You may have a splint in place following surgery, and this will remain until you are seen in clinic.

**Pain Control:** Dr. LaPrade recommends a nerve block for most patients undergoing elbow, wrist, or ankle surgery as this is by the far the most effective short-term option for pain relief. The length of this nerve block will vary based on the location and type of medication. It is not uncommon for patients to feel great after surgery until the nerve block wears off and then have increased pain if they have not been taking any medication.

Dr. LaPrade also recommends ice for help with pain and inflammation. Unfortunately, you will not get much benefit from the ice if you have a splint in place. While you are resting, you can use a Nice Machine, Game Ready or place cold ice packs for 15-20 minutes at a time. Place a clean, dry towel or pillowcase between your skin and the cold pack. Your preoperative surgical packet contains information regarding how to obtain a Nice machine.

If you had surgery on your elbow, try and keep your extremity above your heart whenever sleeping or resting to help decrease inflammation and pain.

Dr. LaPrade recommends scheduling your medications (especially the Tylenol and Ibuprofen) to take them regularly the first couple of days after surgery to not fall behind on pain control.

### **Postop Medication Regimen:**

- Anticoagulant/Blood Thinner (usually Aspirin or Lovenox)
  - This is meant to help prevent blood clots, and all fractures are high-risk for a possible blood clot
  - The exact blood thinner will depend on the surgery and location
  - If you are already on a blood thinner, please resume the medication the day after surgery and do NOT take this additional blood thinner
- Tylenol 1000 mg every 8 hours
  - Highly recommend continuing this for the first couple weeks after surgery as it can be quite effective as a baseline pain medication
- Ibuprofen/Prescription NSAID

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- Please do not take if you have history of kidney disease, stomach ulcers, or GI bleeds
- Oxycodone 5 mg tablets, which you can take up to 2 pills every 4 hours
  - This medication is absolutely not required, and every effort should be taken to try and be off this medication by 2 weeks after surgery. We will generally not provide any additional pain medications besides a single refill postoperatively.
  - These medications will not be filled after-hours or on weekends per TCO policy so please anticipate a need to contact the office for a refill ahead of time
- Over-the-counter stool softener, such as Miralax or Colace
  - Narcotic pain medications are known to cause constipation, and Dr. LaPrade recommends taking one of these medications daily while on the narcotic
- Zofran
  - Narcotic pain medications may also cause nausea, and Zofran will be provided to be taken only as needed
- All other home medications can be resumed the day after surgery unless otherwise stated

**Dressing:** It is normal to see some staining on your dressings after surgery. Please alert our office if the dressing is completely saturated or leaking. Please also let us know if your splint gets wet, as it may require a new splint.

- If you have a **splint after surgery** (typically an elbow procedure) Please keep the splint completely clean and dry. If the splint gets wet, it may not work effectively and can also cause wound issues. If using a shower bag to keep the dressing completely dry, you can then shower immediately after surgery. We will remove the splint at your 1 or 2 week appointment and remove any sutures if needed. Do not take a bath or submerge the wound for at least 4 weeks after surgery (assuming the incisions are all healed).
- For a **hip fracture ORIF or hemiarthroplasty**: Please keep your dressing in place until your first postoperative appointment. This dressing is waterproof and you can shower immediately after surgery avoiding direct water on the dressing. There will be either surgical glue, steri-strips, or sutures/staples beneath the dressing, and please leave these in place. There may also be clear sutures at the ends of the incisions that we will cut at the first postop visit. Do not take a bath or submerge the wound for at least 4 weeks after surgery (assuming the incisions are all healed).



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**Diet:** Dr. LaPrade does not have any restrictions on diet after surgery but recommends a light meal the first night after surgery given the possibility of nausea after anesthesia.

**Follow-Up:** Typically, you will have a postoperative appointment about 2 weeks after surgery. This will be scheduled before surgery in most cases and can be done in Eagan, Edina, or Eden Prairie.

**Questions or Concerns:** Please reach out to Dr. LaPrade's office at 952-808-3090 or [juliawareham@tcomn.com](mailto:juliawareham@tcomn.com) (Dr. LaPrade's care coordinator) if there are any postoperative concerns. Dr. LaPrade or Grace will reach out as soon as possible to address any questions. This may include issues with pain control, the surgical wound, fevers or chills, concern for leg swelling/DVT (blood clot), shortness of breath, or others. We will make every effort to respond within 24 hours during the week.

TCO also has an urgent care open at 12 different locations from 8 am-8 pm including weekends, and this provides you the chance to see an orthopaedic provider if an in-person visit is needed. If there is an urgent postoperative question after 5 pm or on weekends, there are other providers available for telephone support at 952-808-3000. We recommend trying any of these routes above over an emergency room if the issue is not a true emergency.