

Distal Radius Open Reduction Internal Fixation Postoperative Instructions

ACTIVITY

- Begin gentle finger range of motion and forearm rotation 2 days after surgery.
- You will begin gentle active wrist range of motion after your 2-week postoperative appointment, once your postoperative splint has been removed.
- No heavy lifting, pushing, or pulling for the first 6 weeks.

DRESSING

- You will have a splint applied to your hand and wrist.
- Keep this clean, dry and intact until your first postoperative appointment.
- Please do not stick anything down or into your splint.
- At 2 weeks your splint will be removed and you will be fitted with a removable splint.
 - You will be encouraged to discontinue your splint use after 6 weeks.
- When showering please keep your splint clean and dry. This is best done by placing a plastic bag over your hand and wrist and securing it to your forearm with a rubber band
- If preferred, cast/splint showering bags can be purchased online or at a pharmacy.

PAIN CONTROL

- You may have received a local anesthetic injection. This provides excellent pain relief for the first 8-24 hours following surgery. This wears off at various times for each patient.
- You will be prescribed pain medication (outlined below) for your postoperative pain.
- We also recommend icing frequently for pain or swelling after surgery.
 - You can use any form of ice (a bag filled with ice cubes, bag of frozen veggies, or reusable ice pack).
 - Use a protective layer (such as a dish towel) between the ice and your skin, so that you do not freeze your skin.
 - Ice for 20 minutes at a time, with at least 20 minutes off in between icing sessions.

MEDICATIONS

- Oxycodone 5 mg, 1-2 tablets every 4-6 hours as needed
 - This is a narcotic pain medication for moderate to severe pain. Most patients will be able to wean from narcotic pain medication within a week.
- Tylenol 500 mg, 2 tablets every 8 hours
 - We recommend this as a baseline pain medication for the first week following surgery.
 - DO NOT exceed 4000 mg of Tylenol in a 24-hour period.
- Ibuprofen 200 mg, 3 tablets every 8 hours

- If you can take NSAIDs, over the counter Ibuprofen can be helpful for mild to moderate pain and can replace narcotic pain medication.
- Zofran (ondansetron) 4 mg, 1 tablet every 6 hours as needed
 - This is an anti-nausea medication that can help resolve nausea associated with anesthesia and narcotic pain medications.
- Colace (stool softener) 100 mg twice daily
 - The use of narcotic pain medication can cause constipation. We suggest using an over-the-counter stool softener (Colace) while taking pain medication. Stop taking this medication if diarrhea develops.
- Resume all home medications the day after surgery.
- Variations in home medications may be made on an individual basis.

DRIVING

- You are not allowed to drive while taking narcotic pain medication.
- Dr. Schuette will discuss when you can return to driving at your first postoperative appointment.

POSTOPERATIVE APPOINTMENTS

- Your first postoperative appointment will be 2 weeks after your surgery.
 - Postoperative x-rays will be taken.
 - Sutures will be removed if needed.
- Your second postoperative appointment will be approximately 6 weeks after surgery.

REASONS TO CALL THE OFFICE

- Please call Dr. Schuette's office (952-442-6943) if you have any questions or concerns, or develop the following:
 - Increased pain that is not responding to pain medication
 - Increased warmth or redness at the surgical site
 - Large amounts of bleeding or drainage
 - A sustained fever greater than 101° F
 - Excess pain or swelling of the calf
 - You significantly injure your operative body part