



Elbow Stabilisation Post-Operative Instructions

The following is an outline of instructions and information for post-operative elbow stabilisation. Although you may have been told different information from friends or others, please follow these instructions specifically and if you have any questions, contact our office. If your particular procedure and instructions differ, you will appropriately be informed by Dr Chien.

Pain and Swelling:

It is normal to have pain and swelling in your elbow after surgery. The swelling may last 2-3 weeks and the pain is variable. Acute pain, however, is usually relieved after the first 3-7 days after surgery. It is normal to see some bruising. Take your oral pain medication as directed for pain. If you have severe pain and swelling, or redness that persists, you should contact our office or your family doctor. Swelling can be minimised by doing the following:

- 1) Make certain your bandage is not too tight. If it is, you may loosen it.
- 2) Ice packs may be used to help with the pain and swelling in your elbow. You should place a towel between the skin and the ice pack to avoid freezing the skin. You may use ice packs as frequently as necessary. This is generally continued for the first 1-weeks after surgery.
- 3) Elevate your arm in a sling (if you are lying down, prop your arm up on several pillows).

Dressing Care:

Keep your dressing clean and dry. There may be some bloody spotting on the dressing initially; this is normal. Excessive bleeding that soaks the dressing must be reported to our office or the Emergency department immediately.

Bathing:

Keep wound dry at all times.

Driving:

Do not drive unless cleared by Dr. Chien. You must be off all pain medication in general before you can be cleared to drive.

Getting back to work:

In general, you may not use your arm for anything apart from prescribed exercises until about 12 weeks after surgery.

Warnings:

Notify Dr. Chien immediately or present to the Emergency Dept if any of the following occur:

- **Excessive bleeding**
- **Excessive non-bloody wound drainage beyond the first 3-4 days**
- **Poor pain control**
- **Numbness or tingling of the fingers not related to bruising**
- **Fever $>37.5^{\circ}\text{C}$ after postoperative day 3**
- **Increased redness along incision**



Follow Up with Dr. Chien:

Usually, your post-operative appointment would have been booked for you prior to surgery. If you do not have an appointment please call to arrange one. If at any time after your surgery you feel you would like to come in earlier for your post-operative appointment, please call the office and arrange a time.

Lateral Xrays required at:

- ☐ 2 weeks
- ☐ 4 weeks
- ☐ 6 weeks post surgery. Keep in splint for Xrays. DO NOT REMOVE.

REHABILITATION:

Referral to hand therapist within 7 days post surgery

Resting orthosis fabrication – ELBOW IN 90°, FOREARM ROTATION BASED ON STABILITY:

- ☐ LCL Repaired with MCL intact – Forearm in pronation

Exercises:

- Active elbow flexion/extension performed in pronation (WHILE PATIENT SUPINE)
- Forearm rotation with elbow flexed at 90° or greater
- Active wrist and finger exercises
- Initiate wrist and grip strengthening when tolerated with the forearm in neutral

- ☐ MCL and LCL Repaired – Forearm in neutral

Exercises:

- Active elbow flexion/extension performed in neutral (WHILE PATIENT SUPINE)
- Forearm rotation with elbow flexed at 90° or greater
- Active wrist and finger exercises
- Initiate wrist and grip strengthening when tolerated with the forearm in neutral
- Isometric exercises of elbow flexors and extensors
- Overhead exercises

- ☐ Robust LCL Repair with deficient MCL – Forearm in supination

Exercises:

- Active elbow flexion/extension performed in pronation (WHILE PATIENT SUPINE)
- Forearm rotation with elbow flexed at 90° or greater
- Active wrist and finger exercises
- Initiate wrist and grip strengthening when tolerated with the forearm in neutral

Splint to be removed only for exercises

6 weeks post surgery:

Cease resting orthosis once sufficient healing confirmed by surgeon

Commence upright ROM exercises

8-12 weeks post surgery:

Commence elbow strengthening