



OrthoVirginia

Upper Extremity Surgery Discharge Instructions

Ryan N. Robertson, M.D.

Please take the time to review the following instructions before you leave the hospital and use them as guidelines during your recovery from surgery. If you have any questions you may contact our office at 804-288-1802 ext. 11073.

Wound Care/Dressing Changes:

___ Do not change your dressings or get them wet.

___ Beginning 2 days after your surgery you may remove your dressings. A big bulky dressing is not necessary as long as there is not any drainage from the incisions. You can put a band-aid or piece of gauze over each incision and wear an ace bandage as needed for comfort and swelling. It is not necessary to apply antibiotic ointment to your incisions. If you have steri-strips they will start to peel off in 7-10 days as you get them wet. When they begin to peel off you can remove them. You have ___ stitches or ___ staples and they will be removed at your follow up visit.

Showering/Bathing:

___ Do not remove your dressings or get them wet until you are seen for your follow up appointment. You will be given further instructions at that time.

___ You may remove your dressings and shower 2 days after your surgery. You may get your incision wet. Don't vigorously scrub the incision area. Apply a clean, dry dressing after thoroughly drying your incision area. Don't take a bath or get into a swimming pool/Jacuzzi until you follow up in the office. **Do not soak your incision under water.**

Sling:

___ You are not required to wear a sling and should do so only as needed for comfort.

___ Keep your arm in the immobilizer/sling at all times except when showering, changing your clothes, and doing the exercises shown to you prior to your discharge from the hospital. When showering or changing, keep your arm at your side. Do not move it away from your body.

Ice/Elevation:

Continue ice and elevation consistently for 48 hours after surgery. **Ice should be applied 30-40 minutes at a time, with a 20-30 minute break in between. Please do not put ice directly on bare skin. We recommend putting a towel or cloth to cover the skin.** After 48 hours, you should ice 3 times per day for 20 minutes at a time for the next 5 days. After 1 week from surgery, you may use ice and elevation as needed for pain and swelling. Do not put ice directly onto the skin. Please place a towel between the ice and your skin.

Physical Therapy:

____ Begin physical therapy _____days from surgery. **Please call the therapy location of your choice for an appointment.**

____ You do not need to begin physical therapy at this time. Physical therapy will be discussed at your follow-up visit.

Diet:

After surgery begin a clear liquid diet and advance to your regular diet as tolerated. Increase your clear liquid intake for the next 2-3 days.

Follow up appointment:

You will need a follow up appointment in 2 weeks from your surgery. Please call our office at 804-288-1802 ext. 11073 to schedule that appointment.

Returning to work:

Normally we will keep you out of work until you return for your follow-up appointment after surgery. If you feel you are able to return to work prior to this appointment, please call our office. Any additional time out of work can be discussed at your follow-up appointment

Medications:

1. **You will be given a prescription for pain medication when you are discharged. Prescriptions for aspirin and/or nausea will be sent directly to your pharmacy. Please use these as prescribed.** Please make sure that you take these medications with food. Pain medication can cause constipation and Colace or Milk of Magnesia may be used as needed. Other possible side effects of pain medication are dizziness, headache, nausea, vomiting, and urinary retention. Discontinue the medication if you develop itching, rash, shortness of breath, or difficulties swallowing. If these symptoms become severe or are not relieved by discontinuing the medication, please seek immediate medical attention.
2. **Refills of pain medication are authorized during office hours only: 8am-5pm Monday through Friday.**
3. Do not take Tylenol/Acetaminophen in addition to your pain medication as most pain medications already contain this. Do not exceed 4000mg of Tylenol/Acetaminophen per day.
4. You may resume your medication that you were taking prior to surgery. Pain medication may change the effects of any antidepressant medication you may be taking. If you have any questions about possible interactions between your regular medications and the pain medication given, you should consult the physician who prescribes your regular medications.

Important Signs and Symptoms:

If any of the following signs or symptoms occurs, you should contact our office. Please be advised if a problem arises which you feel requires immediate medical attention you should seek immediate medical attention at the closest ER.

1. A sudden increase in swelling and/or redness or warmth at the area your surgery was performed **which is not relieved by rest, ice, and elevation.**
2. Oral temperature greater than 101 degrees for 12 hours or more that is not relieved by an increase in fluid intake and taking 2 Tylenol every 4-6 hours.
3. Excessive drainage from your incisions or drainage that has not stopped by 72 hours after surgery.
4. Fever, chills, shortness of breath, chest pain, excessive nausea, vomiting, or other signs or symptoms which are of concern to you.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Dr. Robertson's office at 804-288-1802 ext. 11073. or through the patient portal at OrthoVirginia.com.