

Bay Area Orthopedic Surgery and Sports Medicine

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POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR OPEN REDUCTION INTERNAL FIXATION OF FRACTURES

Activities:

- 1) You may not use your operated limb to support any amount of body weight until your physician instructs you to do so.
- 2) If your injury involved one of your upper extremities, you may not use that limb to reach, grasp or lift any objects. You may not use this limb to support any amount of body weight until your physician instructs you to do so.
- 3) If you have an ice machine, use it as much as possible until your first post-op appointment. There should be a cloth barrier between the ice pack and your skin at all times.
- 4) If you do not have an ice machine, you can use an ice pack or frozen peas. Use this for twenty minutes every two to three hours. There should be a cloth barrier between the ice pack and your skin at all times.
- 5) Elevate your affected limb above your heart as much as possible after your surgery. Your physician will tell you when it is no longer beneficial to elevate your injured limb.
- 6) Do not drive until approved by your doctor. Do not drive if you are taking narcotics or muscle relaxants as they can make you drowsy and slow your reaction time.
- 7) **Do not remove your splint or brace** that was put on after surgery until you are instructed to do so by your physician.
- 8) Return to work depends on your type of employment and can be discussed at your post-op appointment.
- 9) You may require certain “assistive” devices (walker, crutches, cane, etc) for use at home to help you with your activities of daily living. The therapist in the hospital will determine your needs, and train you in the use of these devices if indicated. If assistive devices are ordered and not dispensed at the time of discharge, they should be delivered to your home within 1-2 days. If they do not arrive within 1-2 days, please call our office.

Diet:

- 1) Begin with liquids and light food (Jell-O, soup, etc.). Progress to your normal diet if you are not nauseated. Sometimes the digestive system is slow to respond after anesthesia, in addition to the use of narcotic pain medication. The use of a mild over the counter laxative may be beneficial.

Medications:

- 1) Take your pain medication as needed, though not more than every (4) four hours. Do not wait until you are in a lot of pain before taking the medication. It takes the medication (30) thirty to (45) minutes to take effect.
- 2) Strong oral narcotic pain medications have been prescribed for the first few days. Use only as directed. Do not combine with alcoholic beverages. Do not drive, operate machinery, or make important legal decisions while taking narcotics.
- 3) Do not take Tylenol or Acetaminophen in combination with pain medications that include these same substances. You may find the contents of the pain medication on the bottle of your prescription.
- 4) You may take anti-inflammatory medication (Motrin, Naprosyn, Ibuprofen, Celebrex, Aspirin, etc) at the same time as your pain medication.
- 5) It is not uncommon to have some stomach upset with use of narcotic medication. For this reason, take your medication with food. If your symptoms are severe, or the medication does not treat your symptoms of post-operative pain, please call the office and we will prescribe a different medication.

Physical Therapy:

While in the hospital, the therapist may give you exercises to do at home. These exercises are important for pain control, range of motion and strength, and we strongly encourage you to follow through with these exercises as prescribed.

After surgery Dr. Nissen will order physical therapy. This typically is ordered at your first post-operative appointment. Prior to your first follow-up appointment, please check with your insurance company and see if there are any limitations to where you can receive therapy. We will make every effort to send you to a physical therapy clinic included in your insurance plan.

Wound Care / Dressings:

- 1) Expect minimal bloody drainage on surgical dressing. Call the office if the bandage becomes saturated. Do not remove your dressings unless instructed to do so. Your dressing will be removed at your first post-operative follow-up appointment.
- 2) Showering is allowed after the dressing is removed, about 10 days after your surgery. Do not soak the knee (no bath tub, hot tub, Jacuzzi, Swimming pool or ocean) until cleared by the doctor.
- 3) Do not put ointment on your incision, or touch the incision until cleared by the doctor.

Follow-up Care:

- 1) You should have an appointment scheduled post-operatively for 5-10 days after surgery. This appointment will be with Dr. Nissen, or Elizabeth Milne PA-C. The purpose of this appointment is to remove your dressings, remove the sutures or staples, and review the operative findings. Please call the office if you need to change this appointment, or if you do not have an appointment (707)645-7210.

When to Call the Office: (707) 645-7210

Call our office if any of the following occurs:

- 1) Increased swelling in the thigh or calf.
- 2) Pain in the thigh or calf.
- 3) Change of color or temperature in the operative limb.
- 4) Pain in the operative extremity, progressively worsening despite proper use of medication.
- 5) Fever greater than 101.5 degrees.
- 6) Excessive nausea/vomiting from use of pain medication.
- 7) Continuous draining or bleeding from the dressing.

