

Elbow Procedures: Ulnar Nerve, Lateral Epicondylitis, Distal Biceps

Pre-Operative Surgery Instructions

YOUR CARE TEAM:

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PRIOR TO SURGERY YOU NEED:

- Pre-operative physical exam (within 30 days of surgery) with your primary care doctor (Notify Rebecca with date)
- Medical clearance if you see any specialists, such as a cardiologist or pulmonologist
- A complete list of medications (prescription and over-the-counter)
- A pre-operative appointment (Notify Rebecca with date)

THINGS TO AVOID:

- **Dental Work** - 2 weeks before and 3 months after surgery. In case of dental emergencies, during this time, you will need to be pre-medicated with antibiotics.
- **NO Flu Shots** - 2 weeks before and up to 6 weeks after surgery
- **Medications**
 - 7 days prior to surgery, all patients must stop medications that **thin or anti-coagulate** the blood; such as: Ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin), Aspirin, naproxen (Aleve), nabumetone (Relafen) and all other anti-inflammatory medications that affect blood clotting.
 - 7 days prior to surgery stop all **over-the-counter herbs, supplements** such as Fish Oil, Co-Q10 and Saw Palmetto, all vitamins and minerals. You may restart them post-op Day 1. Phen Phen must be stopped 14 days prior to surgery.
 - Special arrangements may be required before you stop blood thinners such as: Coumadin, Plavix, Eliquis, Pradaxa, Arixtra and Xarelto. Contact your prescribing physician for instructions on discontinuing use.
 - **DO NOT take pain medication with alcohol, recreational drugs, etc.**
 - **NO driving while taking any narcotics**

Night before Surgery

DO NOT eat or drink anything after midnight the night before (including coffee, milk and gum). The surgical facility may provide other instructions. Certain medications can be taken the morning of surgery with a sip of water. Confirm this with your Primary Care Physician and anesthesiologist. For example, some diabetic medications may require special dosing. Instructions will be provided by your physician.

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Surgical Site

If your surgical site has any type of insect bites, skin irritation, rash, or acne, please call *Rebecca* or *Jenal* or contact us through *your patient portal*. **Such conditions could be cause for cancellation of surgery.**

Medication:

- **Pain Medications Refills** - Refills after surgery will be filled Monday through Friday 8AM to 3PM only – allow up to 48 hours to have your prescription filled. All pain medications are handwritten and must be picked up at the office. NO prescription will be issued on weekends or after 3PM on weekdays.
- **Pain Management** – This will be reviewed at your pre-operative appointment.
- **Nausea Medication** - You will receive a prescription for nausea. Prescription will be e-prescribed to your pharmacy.

Stool Softener

The pain medication can cause constipation so make sure you are staying well hydrated with water/fluids. If you have not used a stool softener in the past Senecot-S is a natural stool softener that can be purchased over the counter at your local pharmacy.

- Take 2 Senecot-S the night before surgery.
- To help prevent constipation, following your procedure, we recommend you take 2 Senecot-S a day while taking your narcotic pain medication

Nerve Block

An Interscalene Block (ISB) is a nerve block in the neck may be used to provide better pain relief for arm surgery. It numbs the main nerve bundles that affect the arm in the same way a dentist uses an injection to numb a tooth or part of your mouth. If a nerve block is not used, local anesthetic is given.

Benefits of an interscalene block (ISB):

- Reduced risk of nausea, vomiting and sedation
- Early intake of food and drink
- Excellent pain control

To avoid pain at the time when the nerve block begins to wear off (which can be in the middle of the night), it is extremely important that you take regular pain medication at the times prescribed from the moment of discharge.

Side Effects of Nerve Block

Most side effects are related to the local anesthetic spreading and numbing the nerves adjacent to the ones that supply the shoulder and arm. Any or all of the following can occur, but tends to resolve as the effects of the anesthetic wear off. In extreme cases, this can last 2-3 months:

- Shortness of breath
- Difficulty swallowing
- Blurred vision
- Residual numbness
- Hoarseness

Post-Operative Instructions

Management of the “Numb Arm”

Keep arm in a sling. Protect it from heat, pressure injury and extremes of movement.

Sling

Sling for comfort. Splint (if applied) must stay in place until post-operative appointment. Bag your arm to shower.

Bathing/Dressing Change

- NO submersion of the effective extremity in a bath tub, hot tub, or swimming pool for 3 weeks after surgery.
- The dressing over your wound is called Dermabond Prineo (if visible).
 - It is ok to shower immediately post-op. Use water ONLY on the dressing and pat dry. NO lotions, creams, oils or soaps on the dressing.
 - NO scrubbing of the incision.
 - If there is excessive drainage, please contact the office.
 - Dressing may peel back. Do NOT remove it. We will address it in the office. Call with concerns.
- Lateral Epicondyle / Distal Biceps – Do NOT remove splint. Bag to shower.
- Sometimes dressing instruction change (or vary). Please always refer to your discharge paperwork.

Physical Therapy

- Ulnar Nerve: Starts immediately after surgery
- Distal Biceps: Starts 2 weeks from date of surgery. Sling for six weeks from date of surgery.
- Lateral Epicondyle: Starts after first post-op appointment. Wrist cock-up brace for six weeks from date of surgery.

FMLA/Short Term Disability Paperwork

Check with your employer. Allow 5-7 business days for any forms to be completed by our office.

Dental Work

For emergency dental work in the first 90 days after surgery you will need a preventative anti-biotic.

Medications as follows:

- Amoxicillin 500mg – 4 capsules 1 hour prior to dental work
- If *allergic to penicillin*, Levaquin 500mg – 1 pill the day before, the day of and the day after

DVT Precautions: Understanding thromboembolic (Blood clot) prevention

- **Stockings** - Compression stockings should be worn until your first post-operative appointment.
- **Medication** - Aspirin (325mg) or Blood Thinner Therapy (Only if indicated)

Sleeping

A reclined position is usually most comfortable. A recliner is NOT a must, but maybe helpful with being able to control the elevation of your head with sleeping. If a recliner is not available, use 3-4 pillows to elevate your bed 30° from a flat position. A pillow behind the surgical arm can provide additional support.

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Traveling/Driving

Please notify us if you will be traveling within one month after surgery.

NO air travel for 2 weeks post-op.

If you will be driving long distances:

- Wear your compression stockings
- Pump your ankles periodically
- Get out and walk around every two hours.

You may resume driving once you are off of your pain medication. The recommendation is short distances only. You must wear your sling and seatbelt unless otherwise instructed.

Post-Operative Problems? Call if...

- Redness, drainage in the operative area
- Calf tenderness or pain with movement of leg
- Fever over 101.5°
- Severe pain not relieved by pain medication
- Any unrelieved nausea or vomiting

NOTES

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.