

Post-op Instructions for Olecranon ORIF

These instructions are to compliment the information given by the nursing staff and physical therapists. They cover many of the common questions.

Wound Care

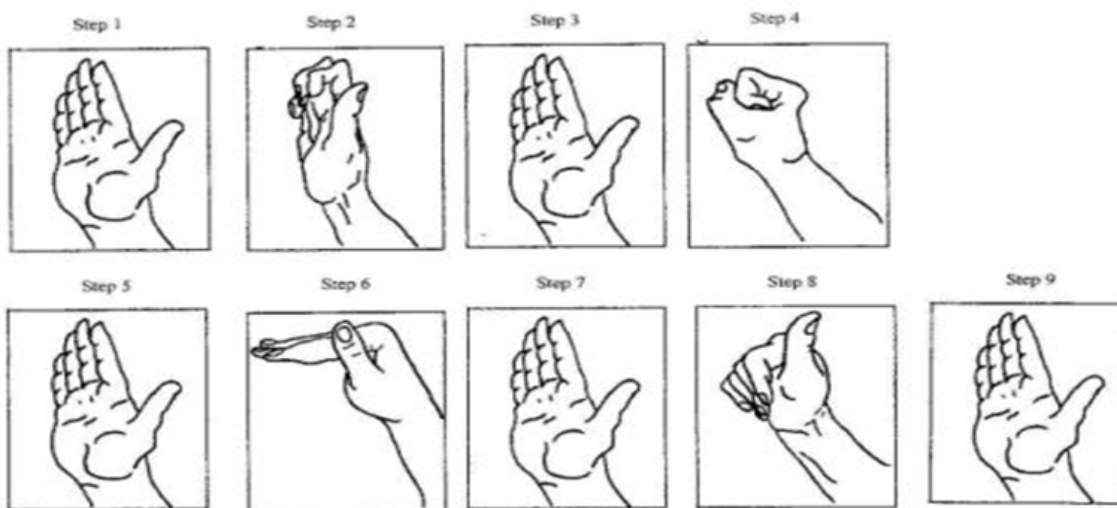
- Dressings and the splint are to be kept clean and dry. The splint should remain on until you follow-up in the clinic with your surgeon. If the ace wrap feels too tight, you may loosen it and/or re-wrap it.
- When showering, please place a plastic bag over the arm up to the shoulder and secure it with tape. You may wrap your arm with Glad Press & Seal plastic wrap instead of a plastic bag. To keep the splint dry, you may wrap a small towel around the splint prior to applying the plastic bag or wrap. Pat the splint dry immediately with a clean towel if it does get slightly wet or you may use a hair dryer on cool to dry.
- If you develop purulent drainage (thick white or greenish in color) from the wound, increasing redness, or a temperature of 101 or higher, please report these symptoms to your surgeon or the doctor on call.

Pain and Swelling

- To lessen pain and swelling, ice your elbow for the first 1-3 days after surgery. Put the ice in a zip lock bag or towel and place over the surgical site, or above your splint. We recommend 20 minutes, 4-5 times per day. Do not place ice or cooling devices directly on the skin for prolonged periods of time as it may damage the skin.
- Narcotic pain medication will be prescribed for use, if needed, after you leave the hospital in limited amounts. Try to wean down/off as soon as you are able and only use narcotic medication for breakthrough pain. Use acetaminophen (Tylenol) and/or anti-inflammatories (ibuprofen or Aleve) as main medications for pain control as/if appropriate. Add the narcotic medication for additional pain control if needed. It can help to stagger your pain medications. A refill is unlikely needed, but if needed, please call the office during regular business hours, Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. In general, refills will not be made after hours or on weekends as they need to be picked up. Please plan ahead.
- Also narcotic medications can cause constipation so you may want/need to use an over the counter stool softeners/laxatives as needed.
- Swelling to some degree is common after surgery. To reduce swelling, elevation is very helpful. Elevate the hand above the heart level for the first 2-5 days after surgery. Elevation for 30 minutes every 2 hours is a good initial recommendation. Excessive pain and swelling should be reported to your surgeon.

Exercises

Gentle hand finger range of motion exercises can begin the day of surgery. You should stay in your splint until your first follow-up appointment with your surgeon.



Driving

To drive you must no longer be taking narcotic pain pills. Also, you must feel strong and alert.

Follow-up

Make sure an appointment has been scheduled for you for approximately 2 weeks after surgery.

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