

Post Operative Instructions  
Elbow Arthroscopy  
Jason Browdy, M.D.

You have just had an elbow arthroscopy. Following these guidelines should give you the best chance for a quick recovery.

**Diet:** Advance to solid food as tolerated.

**Bandages:** Leave your dressings on until you follow up in the office in 3 days. If you leave the surgery center with a cooling pad, you may remove it and replace it as needed.

You will leave the surgery center with a thigh high compression hose on each leg. Please continue to use these for two weeks after surgery to prevent blood clots.

**Bathing/Shower:** You should keep the surgical site dry until the incision is fully healed. This generally takes 7-10 days. You should consider sponge bathing for the first 7-10 days after surgery. Once the incisions are fully healed, as determined by Dr. Browdy, you may get your incision wet in the shower, but you should avoid submerging under water until you are four weeks out of surgery.

**Activity:** You will leave the surgery center with your arm in a sling and possibly a wrist splint. You may come out of the sling periodically to move the elbow and hand but try to avoid moving your wrist. At your first office visit, Dr. Browdy will discuss with you a gradual timeline for return to normal activities.

It is a good idea to get up and move around frequently around your home to prevent blood clots.

**Medications:** Many patients elect to have a "block" prior to surgery to help with post-operative pain relief. This block provides significant pain relief in the early post-operative period, but it will wear off 8-12 hours after surgery.

You may be prescribed two narcotic pain medications to help with control the pain you might experience after the block wears off. It is very important to "stay ahead" of the pain by taking the medication prior to the onset of severe pain. If you are prescribed oxycodone, we recommend using it for a

maximum of 48 hours. Take your first dose before bed time the night of surgery. If you start to regain sensation in the hand or fingers before bed time, it is advisable to take your pain medicine - **do not wait until you hurt to take your pain medicine**. You should switch to hydrocodone on the third day after surgery

Pain medicine can cause nausea, so take the medication with food. You may be given a prescription to deal with nausea. You do not need to fill this prescription, but you should keep it handy in the event you need it.

Unless advised otherwise, please start taking a full Aspirin a day after surgery for three weeks to help minimize the risk of a blood clot. If you cannot tolerate taking Aspirin, please notify Dr. Browdy and his staff.

**Comfort Measures:  
Problems:**

As part of the recovery process following surgery, Dr. Browdy highly encourages his patients to use a motorized cold therapy machine (a.k.a. cryo unit). The unit is beneficial for the entire post-operative course by reducing pain and swelling during recovery and throughout physical therapy treatment. The machine will give 6-8 hours of continuous cold therapy to the affected body part. If you elect not use a cryo unit, you may use a large bag of ice. In either case, keeping the shoulder cool will help significantly reduce swelling and pain. If you have an ice machine with a thermostat, do not let the temperature go below 45 degrees, as frostbite can occur.

**Problems:**

It is not uncommon for the hand to experience slight swelling and/or numbness or tingling in the hand. This can be in part due to constriction of the wrist by your sling, and removing the sling periodically can help. It is also common to experience bruising of the elbow for a few days after surgery.

Please contact Dr. Browdy's office if you have any of the following:

1. Severe Pain
2. A Temperature above 101 Degrees
3. Pain, redness or significant swelling in your knee or calf (a bruised appearance is normal)

Please call us if you have **any** questions.

**Appointments:** You will need to see Dr. Browdy for a follow-up appointment 3 days after surgery. Please call the office at 314-991-2150 to make this appointment.

**Phone Numbers:** Motion Orthopaedics: 314-991-2150

For any urgent need after normal business hours or on weekends you may call the after hours line at 1-888-456-8166.

**Medication Refill Policy:** **It is the policy of Motion Orthopaedics that narcotic medications will only be refilled during office hours. Please be patient with the office staff. If you call during patient hours, your call may be returned at the end of the day.**