

Post Operative Instructions  
Ulnar Collateral Ligament Reconstruction  
Jason Browdy, M.D.

You have undergone an ulnar collateral ligament reconstruction. Following these guidelines should give you the best chance for a quick recovery.

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

**Bandages:** Leave your splint on until you follow up in the office in 7-10 days.

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 your incision is fully healed. This generally take 7-10 days. For the first 7-10 days after surgery, you will be in a plaster splint, which you will need to keep dry. During this time, you should consider sponge bathing or taking a bath. Once the incision is 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 a splint on the elbow. This should be left intact and should be left clean and dry. You may use a sling, as the splint may be heavy. You may require pain medication for 7-10 days after surgery. Please do not drive after taking pain medication. Plan to have a family member or friend assist with transportation.

It is advisable to get up and “move around” is much as you can tolerate after surgery, as doing so helps prevent blood clots.

We generally allow about two weeks for the incision to heal prior to starting aerobic exercise. Once the incision is healed (about two weeks after surgery), you may consider starting to ride a stationary bike. Please check with Dr. Browdy before initiating this.

When the splint comes off, you will be placed in an elbow brace. This will generally stay on until you are approximately six weeks out of surgery.

**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 12-24 hours after surgery. Your arm will likely remain weak for the duration of the nerve block.

You will 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. We recommend using oxycodone 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:**

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 elbow 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.

If you use ice bags, you can apply to the arm for 15-20 minutes at a time. However, please make sure that if you use ice, you keep the splint and dressings dry. If you are applying ice after the splint is off, always use a cloth or towel as a barrier between the ice and your skin to avoid frostbite.

**Problems:**

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.**