

Total Elbow Arthroplasty Surgery Guide

General Information

- You can eat and drink when you feel able to.
- Swelling and pain is normal, especially for the first 48 hours. Each patient experiences discomfort to a different degree but you can expect your discomfort to decrease rapidly over the first 48-72 hours postoperatively.
- Ice can be applied as needed for 20 minutes at a time, with 20 minute breaks in-between.
- Heat may be used as needed after the swelling is completely gone.
- Keep your arm elevated when not in use to reduce swelling. You may lower your arm for use, but this could cause your arm to throb and swelling to increase.
- Your doctor will give you a prescription for pain medication before you leave the hospital. Please check with us if you are allergic to any pain medication.
- Please follow the instructions given to you by the anesthesia team if you've received a nerve block (with or without a catheter) into your neck.
- You will have receive a local anesthetic during your operative procedure. In general, the local anesthesia continues to work for 4-12 hours postoperatively. This local anesthesia will greatly diminish your discomfort. However, as the anesthetic begins to wear off, you are encouraged to take your pain medication to help alleviate the ensuing anticipated discomfort.
- If you are experiencing any of the following, call our office or the doctor on call immediately:
 - Fever greater than 100.4 °F
 - Chills
 - Shortness of breath
 - Excessive redness or swelling of incisions
 - Yellow (pus-like) or white drainage at incision sites
 - Bleeding that soaks your dressings and cannot be controlled by firm pressure
 - Pain not relieved by prescribed medications

How to reach your provider:

MyChart:

This is the easiest and quickest way to contact your provider. You may send a message anytime, and can include photos as needed.

By phone:

Weekdays 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Call the Upper Extremity
Orthopaedic Clinic at
503-494-8645.

After business hours/weekend/
holidays: Call the OHSU Hospital
Operator at 503-494-8311 and
ask to be connected to the on-call
orthopaedic resident.

www.ohsu.edu/ortho





Activity

- No weight bearing with the operative side until your first post-operative appointment, approximately two weeks after your procedure.
- Once your block wears off, it is OK to wiggle and gently massage your fingers on the operative side but no lifting more than a pound or two.
- When you can return to work is dependent upon the type of work you do. Please ask your surgeon for specific work restrictions.
- You can drive once you are fully weight-bearing and no longer taking narcotics.

Wound and Splint Care

- Keep your splint on and dry until your first post-operative appointment, approximately two weeks following your procedure. It is OK to shower but your splint needs to be covered and water-tight.
- No soaking or swimming until your wound has fully closed.

Therapy

- Formal therapy to start approximately two weeks post-surgery after your first post-operative appointment with our clinic.
- Therapy can take place at OHSU, or with a therapist of your choice. Please let our office know where you are planning to go if outside of OHSU by your first post-op appointment.

Follow-up appointments you should have scheduled:

- You will have your first post-operative appointment with our office approximately two weeks after your procedure with one of your surgeon's Physician Assistants. Your sutures will be removed at this appointment.

Scheduled on:

__/__/__ at __: __am/pm

- You will either be scheduled for a therapy appointment at OHSU approximately two weeks after your procedure, or you will need to set-up an appointment with an outside therapist to start approximately two weeks after your procedure.

Scheduled on:

__/__/__ at __: __am/pm

- Your second post-operative appointment will be approximately six weeks after your procedure and will be with your surgeon. You will get x-rays at this appointment.

Scheduled on:

__/__/__ at __: __am/pm

Please let our office know if you need to make any of these appointments.