
Post-Operative Instructions

Wrist Arthroscopy with TFCC Repair

Bandages & Ace Wrap:

Your post-operative dressing has three layers you need to understand in order to properly care for your care of your wrist for the 2 weeks following surgery. Your arthroscopic incisions were closed with a single stitch and then covered with bacitracin and non-stick dressing material. Occasionally there are additional larger incisions that are required to repair your soft tissues.

The second layer is a large white fluffy dressing that is loosely wrapped around your wrist. Since arthroscopy is performed with water, this second layer can absorb some water that will leak from your wrist for the first couple hours after surgery. Occasionally, there will be a small amount of blood mixed with water which is nothing to worry about, however if you see a lot of bleeding please call Dr. Pensak. The third and final layer is a long ace wrap that was wrapped around your forearm, hand and wrist. Depending on the findings at the time of surgery and the procedures performed, you may be placed into a long arm splint to immobilize your entire forearm and wrist from moving to prevent any damage to the surgical repair.

Washing & Bathing:

You should be careful to keep the wound clean and dry until I see you back in the office for your first postoperative visit.

Motion, Ice & Elevation:

One important goal following surgery is to minimize swelling around the wrist. The best way to achieve this is with the frequent application of ice and by keeping the hand and arm elevated. This is most important within the first 48 hours following surgery. The ice pack should be large (like a big zip-lock bag) and held firmly around your wrist. It is important to keep the entire hand and arm elevated on a couple of pillows. We follow the “one to four” rule – which means that for every hour your hand and arm is down it takes four hours to reverse the swelling.

The tendons that move your fingers are found close to the surgical site on your wrist. We do not want scar tissue to form that could stiffen your hand; therefore I want you to practice wiggling your fingers every hour. This will prevent hand stiffness.

Physical Therapy:

Your physical therapy appointment will be made for you after your surgery. It is important to start physical therapy after your splint and/or cast has been removed. The goal of physical therapy is to first assess how your body responded to the surgical procedure. They will re-introduce you to your wrist so that you feel comfortable with your surgery and are not afraid to start doing things. Your therapist will start range of motion



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and strength exercises on your first visit. If they find anything unexpected they will let Dr. Pensak know right away.

Follow up appointment:

We try to give all of our patients a follow-up office visit at the time we schedule your surgery. Sometimes I find things or do things I did not anticipate during your surgical procedure, therefore I may want to see you in the office sooner than originally planned. Typically I want to see my patients in the office 7-10.

Follow up appointment: _____

Medications:

I will usually prescribe two medications for the control of your post-operative pain. During surgery will often inject a numbing medicine like novocaine, (or the anesthesiologist gave you a total shoulder block) that will give some pain relief for several hours after surgery. It is important to begin taking your pain pills before this medicine wears off.

The first medication I use is which is a strong narcotic pain medication. It will begin to work within 15 minutes of taking it with maximal effect in 1 to 2 hours. For some sensitive patients, when taking the first few doses you may experience nausea or an episode of vomiting. The best way to prevent this is to take the medicine with a little food, start with just one pill, and be patient while the medicine begins to work. Usually, after the first few doses the nausea will go away. IF the nausea persists, it is possible that a similar response will occur with other narcotic pain pills.

The second medication I recommend is a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medication like Advil (Ibuprofen) or Alleve (Naproxen). These are over the counter medications you can purchase at your pharmacy and **should be taken as directed on the bottle**. These medications should be taken with food. Most postoperative inflammation peaks by day 4 so these agents are very helpful during the first four days of surgery to help minimize pain and swelling.

What to watch out for:

- Pain that is increasing every hour in spite of the pain medication
- Drainage from the wound more than 2 days after surgery
- Increasing redness around surgical site
- Pain or swelling your surgical site
- Fever greater than 101
- Increasing pain with walking
- Locking or catching within the wrist that is getting worse not better
- Unable to keep food or water down for more than one day



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Who to call for questions or problems:

If you are having problems or there are questions you need answered then please call our office at 732-349-8454 and our staff will assist you. Our hours of operation for our phone room are as follows: Monday through Thursday 8:30am- 4:30pm and Friday 8:00am – 4:00pm.

We realize that after surgery some problems or questions are urgent and cannot wait until normal working hours. Under these circumstances we have a service that will get the message to a doctor on call for our office by calling the main number 732-349-8454.

*****If an emergency were to occur please go to the nearest ER for immediate attention.**

**Wishing you- All the Best,
Michael Pensak, M.D.**