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POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS ARM SURGERY

DIET:

1. Begin with liquids and light foods such as Jell-O and soups.
2. Advance as tolerated to your regular diet if not nauseated.
3. If your anesthesia involved a breathing tube you may have a sore throat for a few days.

FIRST 24 HOURS:

1. Be in the care of a responsible adult.
2. Do not drive or operate machinery.
3. Do not make important personal or business decisions, or sign any legal documents.
4. Do not drink alcoholic beverages.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Elevate the limb above your shoulder and preferably above chest for first 48 hours. This is the most reliable method of pain control and swelling reduction.
2. Ice the surgical area in a waterproof bag for 30 minutes each hour while awake for first 48 hours.
3. Your doctor will advise you on sling or immobilizer use.
4. Do not engage in activities that increase your pain.
5. Return to work depends on your type of employment.

Exercise:

1. Begin exercises immediately for your arm and repeat hourly while awake:
 - Carry all non-immobilized joints through a full range of motion.
 - Isometrics (tightening the arm and shoulder muscles)
 - Grasping (making a tight fist and opening fingers all the way)
2. Your routine exercises generally will be discussed at your first post operative visit. This may include a referral for therapy.

Wound Care:

1. Maintain your postoperative dressing.
2. If you feel your dressing is too tight, loosen the outer wrap only. Some hand swelling is to be expected. Bruising of the surgical area and even to the hand and fingers is common post operatively.
3. Keep the surgical incisions dry until your sutures are removed when you see your doctor. Use a plastic bag with two rubber bands to cover the limb during showers. Immersing the limb in water is to be avoided. Tape and Saran Wrap do not work

Medications:

1. Most likely your surgeon injected long acting local anesthetic (Novocain) into your wound. It usually lasts for 12-16 hours (but can last for 24 hours) and likely will cause numbness in the wound area and possibly into your hand.
2. Strong oral narcotic pain medications have been prescribed for the first few days. Use only as directed. No pain medication is capable of taking away all the pain. Taking your pills at regular intervals will give you the best chance of having less pain.
3. Try to get your prescription at a pharmacy with extended hours. When you need a refill you want them to be open.
4. If you need a refill PLEASE PLAN AHEAD. Call our office during regular hours (8-12 and 1-5).
5. Do not combine with alcoholic beverages.
6. Be careful as you walk, climb stairs or drive as mild dizziness is not unusual.
7. Do not take medications that have not been prescribed by your surgeon.
8. You may switch to over the counter pain medication of your choice as you become more comfortable.

WHEN TO CALL YOUR SURGEON:

1. Significant swelling or any new numbness in the limb that was operated on
2. Unrelenting pain
3. Fever or Chills
4. Redness around incisions
5. Color change in arm or hand
6. Continuous drainage or bleeding from wounds (a small amount of drainage is expected)
7. Any other worrisome condition

WHEN TO CALL YOUR REGULAR DOCTOR:

1. Flare up of any of your regular medical conditions

WHEN TO CALL 911:

1. Chest Pain
2. Shortness of Breath
3. Any other acute serious condition

FOLLOW-UP CARE:

1. You should have an appointment with your doctor for 7-10 days after your surgery.
2. Call 303-665-0286 to make this appointment if not made at your pre op visit.

Acknowledgement:

I acknowledge that I understand these instructions and that I have no further questions.

DATE: _____

Patient

Responsible Adult Companion