

## Surgery Instructions– General/Miscellaneous

## After Surgery

**\*\*\* All instructions & protocols can be found on my website \*\*\***

**<http://www.patrickmcgahanmd.com/physical-therapy-pdfs.html>**

- Post-operative Appointment
  - If you have not already made one, call my office to schedule your first appointment 1-2 weeks after surgery
- Pain Control
  - Pain medication will be given at your pre-operative appointment
  - Narcotics are used as needed
  - Anti-inflammatories can be started directly after surgery, can be taken regularly, and may continue for four weeks after surgery
  - For medication refills or changes,
    - For refills of medications, call your pharmacy or my office during office hours
    - For changes to medications, call my office during office hours
    - On-call physicians can NOT prescribe for patients they have not seen
  - Ice the knee 20 minutes per hour for the first 72 hours while awake
    - Be very careful when applying cold directly to the skin in limiting how much time it is used to avoid cold burns
    - If a cold therapy unit has been supplied, it is for home use.
    - After the first 72 hours, ice the knee at least 3 times a day and especially after physical therapy sessions
    - It will work through the dressings
- Dressings
  - Dressings and Splint: Directions are variable based on your surgery: 2 possibilities
    1. Dressings: keep dressing clean, dry, and intact until your follow-up appointment. Ok to shower with your dressing in place, but try and keep it as dry as possible

OR

    2. Splint: keep splint, clean, dry, intact until follow-up appointment. If you want to shower, you must use cast bag to keep splint dry!

Once the dressings or splint are removed at your post-operative appointment, you can use soap and water on the wounds

  - Do NOT take a bath or swim as the incisions should not be soaked in water for 4 weeks post-op
  - Keep the incisions clean and dry as much as possible
- Swelling & Tingling
  - It is normal to have some mild swelling, tingling, or numbness after surgery
  - Keep the extremity elevated above the heart on several pillows when sitting or laying down
  - Sometimes the dressing might be too tight and can be re-wrapped, if necessary

### HAND SURGERY:

1. Open and close fist fully 20 times/hour to achieve full finger range-of-motion
2. Elevate hand above heart at all times for first 3 days

- Physical Therapy
  - Physical therapy usually begins one week after surgery
  - If you have not already been given an appointment for physical therapy after surgery, please contact my office for a referral
    - My office will supply you with a prescription for your therapist
    - My physical therapy protocol can be downloaded from my website, or you can defer to the therapy protocol of your therapist
  - The type of surgery you have will determine what you can do after surgery

**Pain control:**

- Ice 20 minutes, 3 times per day.
- Elevate extremity above heart as much as possible.
- Ibuprofen 800 mg every 8 hours as needed
- Norco 1-2 tablets every 6 hours as needed

**Pain Control:**

1. Pain is worse the first 48-72 hours
2. Pain is often worse the day after surgery when a nerve block or local anesthesia wears off
3. Take your pain medicine on a regular, scheduled basis
4. Take the pain medication before the pain becomes severe, so that you “stay ahead of the pain.”
5. Ice 20 minutes, 3 times per day or use the cold therapy unit.
6. Elevate extremity above heart as much as possible.
7. Ibuprofen 800 mg every 8 hours as needed
8. Norco (or other narcotic pain medication) 1-2 tablets every 6 hours as needed