**You are having surgery on your elbow: What to expect…….**

It is normal to have swelling and discomfort after surgery that may last anywhere from days to a week or more.

If you had a nerve block with your surgery, your arm may feel numb for up to 12 to 24 hours after surgery.

Following your surgery you will be provided with narcotic medications. These medications are designed to help with, but not completely take away, the post-operative pain. **DO NOT TAKE MORE OF THE PAIN MEDICATION**!!!!!!!

If you feel as though the pain is unbearable despite taking the pain medications AS PRESCRIBED, then your only other option is to go to the emergency room for pain control/management. We cannot safely prescribe you anything stronger that can be taken without constant monitoring.

**MEDICATIONS**

*The following medications are combination drugs that contain* ***TYLENOL/Acetaminophen*** *(in addition to the narcotic):*

* Percocet (Oxycodone/Acetaminophen)
* Norco (Hydrocodone/Acetaminophen)
* Tylenol #3 (Acetaminophen with Codeine)
* Endocet (Oxycodone/Acetaminophen)
* Ultracet (Tramadol/Acetaminophen)
* Lorcet (Hydrocodone/Acetaminophen)
* Lortab (Hydrocodone/Acetaminophen)
* Roxicet (Oxycodone/Acetaminophen)

***IF you were prescribed one of these combination medications (or another combination drug containing Tylenol or Acetaminophen), YOU MUST BE CAUTIOUS ABOUT ADDING TYLENOL/ACETAMINOPHEN TO THESE MEDICATIONS. You should not exceed 3000mg of Tylenol/Acetaminophen in a 24 hour period. When taken in excessive doses, Tylenol/Acetaminophen can cause liver damage.***

**Do not drive or operate heavy machinery while taking narcotic medications**.

**Common side effects of narcotic pain medications:**

* Itching, rash
* Nausea
* Drowsiness
* Constipation
  + To help avoid constipation, drink plenty of water. It is also helpful to take an over the counter stool softener such as Colace or Senokot.

**If you had a common extensor tendon repair, common flexor tendon repair, biceps repair, or triceps repair, do not take anti-inflammatory medication (Aleve, Advil, Motrin, Ibuprofen, Naproxen) unless instructed to do so.**

**PRE-OPERATIVE MEDICATIONS**

* **It is very important that you resume taking all of the medications that you were taking prior to your surgery, IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING YOUR SURGERY. Individuals who take a daily Aspirin for cardiac reasons and who were instructed to stop it for 5-7 days prior to their surgery should absolutely resume taking the Aspirin immediately after their surgery.**
* **Patients who were prescribed PLAVIX usually need to hold from taking the medication for 10 days prior to surgery and may restart the medication 7-10 days after surgery.**

**ICING YOUR ELBOW**

* Icing is very important for the first 5-7 days postoperative. While the post-op dressing is in place, icing should be continuous. Once the dressing is removed on the first or second day, ice is applied for 15 minute periods 3-4 times per day. Care must be taken with icing to avoid frostbite to the skin or numbing of the ulnar nerve. If you rented an ice machine from BioWorks, you may use this in 20-40 minute increments. Icing is most important in the first 48 hours, although many people find continuing it lessens their postoperative pain.

**CALL THE OFFICE IMMEDIATELY** with any signs/symptoms of infection at the incision site(s) such as:

* Redness
* Swelling
* Warmth
* Drainage
* As well as if you experience any fever greater than 101.5, chills, and/or pain that is not relieved by the pain medications.

It is not uncommon to have clear or red-tinged drainage the night of surgery. This type of drainage does not require an emergent call.

**If the office is closed or if you cannot reach anyone in the office** you should call (513) 354-3700 and ask to speak to the physician on call.

**OTHER**

* Make sure that you have established support system prior to your surgery so that you will have people who can assist you during your recovery phase.
* Abstain from drinking alcoholic beverages and smoking prior to your surgery and during your recovery phase.
* Drink plenty of water and eat a regular diet.
* Plan to take **AT LEAST** a week off from work. We can provide a work note for you if necessary.
* Your dressing will be removed at your first physical therapy visit or first office visit.
* If you were placed in a splint, you should remain in the splint until your first office visit.
* You may shower immediately with your wound covered. You may shower with your wound uncovered after your first office visit. You should not submerge your wounds in water for 3-4 weeks. You should stay away from ponds, rivers, lakes, pools and hot tubs for 1 month after surgery.

**PHYSICAL THERAPY**

* Following surgery, you will be prescribed a regimen of physical therapy.
* **You will begin physical therapy a few days after surgery.**
* **If you are going to a facility other than Beacon Orthopedics, please notify our office so that we can forward them the particular protocol for your surgery. Commonly used physical therapy protocols can also be found at** [**www.doctorrolf.com**](http://www.doctorrolf.com)**.**
* **Dr. Rolf will provide you with specific physical therapy instructions on the day of your surgery or during your first post-operative visit (7-10 days after your surgery).**

Should you have any other questions regarding your post-operative instructions, feel free to contact us at (513) 813-1639.

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