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Upper Extremity Specialist

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Ulnar Nerve Decompression Post-Operative Instructions:

What surgery did I have? You had surgery to relieve pressure on the ulnar nerve at the elbow.

What should I expect the day of surgery? You will have a soft dressing on the arm with a sling for comfort. You may discontinue the sling as comfortable.

Icing: Apply ice to the surgical site for twenty minutes every hour during waking hours. If dressing is too bulky, apply ice just proximal to dressing.

Anesthesia: Anesthesia can take up to 24 hours to leave your system. During this time you should not be left alone. You should not operate heavy machinery, care for small children, make important decisions, sign legal documents, drink alcohol or participate in strenuous activity.

Emptying your bladder: Sometimes the bladder is slow to wake up from anesthesia. If you have not urinated within 8 hours of your surgery, call your physician and go to the emergency department.

Diet: For the first 24-48 hours after surgery, keep your diet bland; avoid spicy, greasy or fatty foods. If you are nauseous, return your diet to clear liquids (water, ginger ale, apple juice, tea, etc) then slowly advance as tolerated.

What medications should I be taking? It is recommended to utilize over the counter acetaminophen (Tylenol) and ibuprofen (Motrin) for pain control.

If a narcotic medication is prescribed:

- Take only as directed and do not exceed dosing as prescribed. Wean down and to over-the-counter medicines as tolerated.
- Do not exceed 4000 mg per day of acetaminophen between your prescription narcotic and over-the-counter Tylenol. Overdosing on acetaminophen can cause severe liver damage.
- A common side effect is constipation. Drink plenty of fluids and consider taking an over-the-counter stool softener daily to prevent this.

When can I remove the bandages? You may remove the bandage 3-5 days after surgery. Keep the incision dry, wearing a waterproof dressing while showering.

What can I do with my arm and hand? You should not do any heavy labor or anything that will put direct pressure on the incision. Begin to gently move the elbow as much as is



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comfortable. You may use the hand to do daily activities that you are comfortable with. It is good to work on moving the hand right away. Try to make a full fist several times per day. Do not lift anything heavier than a coffee cup.

When should I have a return appointment? You should have a follow up visit with a provider on our team approximately two weeks after surgery. If this is not yet scheduled, please call our secretary at the number listed at the top of this page to arrange.

Can I drive? It is your responsibility to determine if you can safely drive. You should not drive while taking narcotic medications.

Following surgery, patients are at increased risk of blood clots. If you develop pain/swelling in the lower legs, shortness of breath, and/or fevers, please call our office immediately and go to the emergency department.

Symptoms of infection include spiked fevers, increasing pain, redness and purulent drainage at the incision site. If these symptoms develop, contact our office immediately. If outside of business hours or immediate evaluation is not available in our clinic, go to the emergency department.