

# Spine & Brain

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## Postop Instructions for our Ulnar Nerve Surgery Patients

Thank you for letting us provide your surgical care. Taking care of yourself after surgery is a key part of your recovery. This information is for our patients who have undergone ulnar nerve surgery. This information sheet is a general guideline to postoperative care, and we may provide you different or additional instructions as needed for you.

### FIRST THREE DAYS

With ulnar nerve surgery, surgery will be done on the inner side of your elbow. You may have your elbow placed in a splint with an ACE wrap over the splint.

It is important to keep your hand or elbow elevated as much as possible. Keep your hand and arm above the level of your heart while sitting, and walking. If you are laying down or sitting, consider propping your elbow and arm up on pillows.

We may have provided you with a sling to help support the weight of your arm and you can wear this if you find it helpful especially when you are sitting or when you are up.

Try to keep the shoulder and the wrist and hand that is not bandaged as mobile as possible and move your shoulder through its complete range of motion several times a day to prevent it from getting stiff.

Keep shoulder and the part of your arm that is not bandaged as mobile as possible and move your shoulder through its complete range of motion several times a day to prevent it from getting stiff.

You may shower or bathe with the wrap/splint on. You can just keep the elbow splint and wrap out of the water. If you prefer, you could also place a plastic bag over the entire hand/arm and seal it with a rubber band or similar closure.

### DAY THREE AND AFTER

Remove the wrap or splint on the third day after surgery. A few small spots of blood on the dressing are normal. You may keep the wound covered with a simple Band-Aid style dressing if you wish. Supplies can be obtained at the local drug store. If you keep the wound uncovered avoid getting it dirty.

While showering, you can leave the wound open to air. Let the water bounce off the incision then blot the wound dry with a towel. Do not scrub the wound. Do not submerge your wound in water (no baths, no hot tubs) until instructed to do so.

Three times a day, work on increasing the mobility in your elbow by gently bending the elbow then straightening the elbow as best you can 10 times. Go slow and do not push it beyond how far feels comfortable.

Avoid lifting objects greater than ten pounds or performing significant, repetitive use of the operated hand/arm. Activity guidelines will be further discussed at your first follow up visit.

## PAIN MANAGEMENT

Some pain can be expected after surgery, and you may be given pain medication for this at discharge. Take your pain medication as directed. Do not take pain medications with alcohol or with illicit drugs.

Pain medication can cause side effects such as nausea, vomiting, and especially constipation. To minimize the likelihood of constipation, take the pain medications only when you need them for pain relief, and try to stay adequately hydrated and include foods with fiber in your diet, or fiber supplements. If there is an over-the-counter medication you have taken in the past for constipation, please feel free to try this. If your symptoms do not improve, you can consider talking to your local pharmacist for advice for other over-the-counter treatments, or your primary care provider, or contact us.

If you need a refill, please contact our office during regular business hours. Contact us 24-48 hours before you run out of your medication because this will give us adequate time to provide you with a refill. Prescription requests cannot be filed on the weekend. If a request is made on a Friday, this may not be available until the following week

## DRIVING

Do not drive while under the effect of pain medication. The incision in your elbow could impair your ability to operate your vehicle. If you feel it is unsafe to drive, have someone else drive for you. You need to use your best judgment in this regard.

## FOLLOW-UP CARE

You will be seen in our clinic 10-14 days after surgery. Our office usually makes this appointment for you when we schedule your surgery, but if you leave the hospital without one, please contact our office to schedule this.

If your appointment is already scheduled, please call the office to verify the time, date, and location since we have two office locations.

Contact us if you have other questions, or concerns. We would rather know how you are doing, and try to answer your questions or concerns, than have you be uncertain or worried about how you are doing.

If you experience emergent or urgent conditions call 911. Otherwise, please contact us at 715-843-1000 or through the patient portal at [spineandbraingroup.com](http://spineandbraingroup.com). Our office hours are Monday-Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. If you were to call after hours, you will automatically be connected to our paging service

We hope this information is helpful and thank you once again for allowing us to provide your surgical care.