



From the office of:

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**POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS  
PROCEDURE: ULNAR NERVE DECOMPRESSION**

**Diet:** Begin with liquids and light foods (crackers, soup, etc.). Progress to your normal diet if you are not nauseated. You have been given a prescription for an anti-nausea medication to be taken if needed.

**Pain Medication:** You have been given a prescription for narcotic pain medicine. These types of medications can cause side effects including nausea, constipation, sedation and confusion. We recommend these only be used for 1 to 2 weeks after surgery. Do not drive while taking narcotic pain medication. An over-the-counter stool softener or laxative, such as Colace, Dulcolax, or Senokot, is recommended to prevent constipation. At any time, acetaminophen (Tylenol) may be substituted instead of your narcotic medicine and used for pain control. Do not exceed 4000 mg of acetaminophen in a 24 hour period. Do not combine with alcohol.

**Elbow Response to Surgery:** It is normal to have pain and swelling in your elbow and arm after surgery. It will take several weeks for this to go away. It is also common to notice bruising around the elbow as the swelling resolves. Keep the arm elevated as much as possible to control swelling.

**Ice:** Keep ice on your surgical site for 30 minutes at a time, then 30 minutes off. We recommend having two ice packs. Keep the unused pack in your freezer, and rotate the packs on and off the surgical site as often as needed. Continue to use the ice as often as possible for the first 5-7 days, then as needed for pain relief.

**Wound Care:** Keep your surgical dressing dry. It may be slightly bloody from the surgical site. This is normal. You may remove the surgical dressing on post-operative day #2. Keep the incisions clean and dry. Place a clean gauze dressing over the wound and change daily. If Steri-strips are present, do not remove them. DO NOT put any ointments or bacitracin on incisions. It may be helpful to place a compressive wrap over the elbow to help control swelling

**Sling:** Wear your sling as needed for comfort.

**Showering:** If there is no bleeding or any other drainage from the surgical incision on postoperative day #3, you may begin showering and allow soapy water to run over the wound. Do not soak or scrub the wound for 6 weeks after surgery.

**Exercises:** Beginning post-operative day #1, perform the following exercises.

- Elbow flexion and extension: Rest your elbow on a table. Then bend your elbow up and down 10 times.



- Elbow pronation & supination: With the elbow bent to 90 degrees, turn your palm up towards the ceiling then down towards the floor 10 times.
- Wrist flexion and extension: Bend your wrist back and forth 10 times.
- Hand flexion and extension exercises: Open and close fingers completely 10 times.
- Do all of these at least 3 times a day.

**Activities:** You may perform normal activities of daily living as tolerated while you are wearing your wrist brace. Do not lift anything >5 lb with the operated arm or perform any other activities that cause pain in the elbow.

**Driving:** You will be unable to drive until you are off narcotic medications and you are able to move the elbow comfortably. This will be approximately 1-2 weeks after surgery. It is important to regain adequate shoulder and arm control before operating a motor vehicle. It is important that you feel very confident in your ability to respond quickly to changing conditions before attempting to drive. Make sure you can safely get in and out of your car, as well.

**Appointment:** A follow-up appointment should be scheduled for you. If you didn't receive an appointment, or if you need to change your appointment time, please call our office at 314-523-2595.

**Problems:** If you develop severe pain, a fever greater than 101.5°, redness around the incision, thick yellow drainage from the incision, excessive bleeding, or persistent nausea and vomiting please call our office at **314-523-2595**.

Monday - Friday, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Our staff will be available to answer questions

Weekends & Evenings

Our after-hours emergency exchange will be able to contact Dr. Blackman

For more information, please visit [andrewblackmanmd.com](http://andrewblackmanmd.com)

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