

---

## **Post-op PATIENT Instructions: OLECRANON ORIF**

**Dressing:** A dressing/splint has been applied to your elbow to absorb any fluid/blood. The splint/dressing will remain (not to be changed) until your 1<sup>st</sup> post-op follow-up appointment with the PA. Soreness and bruising is expected for several days afterward.

**Bathing:** Showering is permitted following surgery but the splint/dressing is not waterproof and needs to be covered and kept dry.

**Ice:** Ice is a powerful anti-inflammatory. Icepacks/wraps will help to reduce swelling and pain. Use liberally (20-30 min./session), but remember to protect the skin from direct contact (and frostbite).

**Activity:** The wrist and fingers should be elevated higher than the level of your heart. Finger range of motion (gripping and straightening the fingers) to reduce swelling is highly recommended. Splints/casts limit reaction driving reaction time. **Driving is NOT recommended until you splint/cast is removed.**

**Pain:** A local numbing medicine has been injected into the surgical site. This may provide temporary pain relief and typically wears off 4-6 hours after surgery. Also, a narcotic prescription is provided. Fill this and begin taking the narcotic when your pain starts. Nausea, drowsiness, and constipation are common side effects of narcotics. Adequate fluid intake and a stool softener obtained over the counter from your local pharmacy is recommended to minimize constipation. Call the office if you are unable to tolerate your medication.

**Precautions:** If you develop temperatures above 101.5°F (38.5°C), uncontrolled pain, marked redness, persistent/discharged drainage, or significant swelling. Call the office **(813)-684-2663**

**Follow-up:** If you do not already have an appointment scheduled, call the office as soon as possible to schedule your first post-op visit.

**Additional Instructions:**

## **SPLINT INFORMATION SHEET**

### **INSTRUCTIONS:**

A splint has been applied to allow your injured arm to heal. Splints never feel completely comfortable. However, by controlling your swelling, pain, and stiffness with ice, elevation and medications your comfort can be maximized.

**Swelling:** Is controlled by use of ice and elevation. Holding the arm overhead or elevating the arm **above the level of your heart** with fingers pointed towards the ceiling is recommended. Propping the arm on pillows can help.

**Ice:** Ice is a powerful anti-inflammatory that helps to control swelling and pain. Surrounding the splint with ice contained in a waterproof container wrapped in a towel is effective.

**Stiffness:** Early and frequent movement of the fingers/toes helps to prevent swelling and discomfort. During arm splinting, shoulder and elbow motion may diminish and should be worked on regularly.

### **SPLINT CARE:**

- **Keep the splint dry!!**
  - Covering with a waterproof bag while showering or in damp areas is recommended.
  - Your splint is **NOT** waterproof!!
  - Getting the splint wet can result in severe skin damage.
  - If the splint is damp, dry your skin with a hair drier (cool setting) for 30 minutes.
  - Call the office immediately if your splint is soaked through or skin maceration occurs.
  
- **NEVER insert ANYTHING under the splint!!**
  - This may result in scratching of the skin and infection!
  - Over-the-counter Benadryl can decrease itching.
  - Chafing/irritation can be reduced by smoothing with a nail file and taping rough edges.
  
- **Do NOT put weight on the splint unless specifically permitted to do so.**

### **CALL THE OFFICE WITH:**

- Unanswered questions/concerns about the splint.
- Severe, unexpected, or persistent pain
- Numbness/tingling of fingers since the splint was placed (after the nerve block wears off)
- Persistent feeling of irritation under the splint
- Foul smelling odor from the splint
- Pus or blood from under the splint
- Fevers >101.5 F lasting longer than 24 hours
- Splint breakage.



**Christopher T. Donaldson, MD**

813.684.BONE (2663)

---

*[www.omgtb.com](http://www.omgtb.com)*

---