



# *Post Operative Instructions: Radius and Ulna Forearm Fracture ORIF*

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## **ACTIVITY**

- Do not put weight on the operated arm until Dr. Gilmer clears you to do so. This includes leaning on the arm, pushing off surfaces, or carrying objects.
- Move your fingers by bending and straightening them at least 10 times a day, staying within your comfort level. This helps reduce swelling and prevent stiffness.
- Move your shoulder and elbow within your comfort zone. You may raise your shoulder overhead and bend and straighten your elbow to help decrease swelling and prevent stiffness.
- Typing or writing may be possible shortly after surgery, but swelling or stiffness can make these activities difficult for 3 to 4 weeks after surgery.

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## **DRESSING & INCISIONS**

- A small amount of red-tinged drainage on the dressing during the first 2 days is normal.
- Keep the dressing clean and dry; protect it while bathing or showering.
- Do not apply Bacitracin or other ointments.
- Avoid soaking in pools, lakes, hot tubs, or the ocean until sutures are removed and the incision is fully healed.

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## **PAIN & INFLAMMATION**

### Ice

- Apply ice wrapped in a dry towel 20 minutes at a time, several times per day for the first week, then as needed.

### Elevate

- You may notice that your fingers will get swollen if your arm is hanging by your side for long periods of time, therefore keep your arm **elevated above your heart** as much as possible for the first 2 to 3 days.

### Pain Medications

- Take your prescribed medications as directed.

#### Tylenol (Acetaminophen)

- First-line for pain.
- Take 1000 mg every 6–8 hours.
- Do not exceed 1000 mg per dose or 4000 mg per day (limit to 3000 mg/day if you have liver issues).
- Do not drink alcohol while taking Tylenol.

#### Oxycodone

- For moderate to severe breakthrough pain only.
- Use sparingly and wean off as soon as possible.

Common side effects include:

- Nausea: Take with food.
- Drowsiness: Do not drive or operate machinery.
- Itching: Benadryl may help.
- Constipation:
  - Use stool softeners (e.g., Senna-Docusate) or OTC options (Mineral Oil, Milk of Magnesia, etc).
  - Avoid bananas, rice, apples, toast, and yogurt (may worsen constipation).
  - Light walking helps stimulate bowel function.

Refills:

- If you think you will need a refill, you must request it during regular weekday office hours.

## **EMERGENCIES**

You must have someone stay with you during the first 48 hours after surgery.

Call the clinic or the on-call orthopedist if:

- Drainage soaks the dressing, increases, smells foul, or if incisions become red, warm, or very painful.
  - You develop a fever >101.5°F or chills.
  - You experience leg or calf pain, swelling, or difficulty breathing.
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## **FOLLOW-UP CARE**

- Schedule a follow-up appointment at ~2 weeks postoperatively for a wound check, suture removal, and review of your surgery (if not already scheduled).
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