Care Guide after Wrist/Shoulder/Elbow/Arm Surgery

I came to the hospital on ______ and left on ______

I came to the hospital because _____

These symptoms are normal	My notes
I may feel pain	
I should take my pain medication before my pain gets really bad.	
I should follow the instructions on my medication bottle.	
 I should use Tylenol and/or Advil (if possible) to manage my pain. I should speak with my pharmacist about appropriate doses for Tylenol, Advil and other medications if I am not sure. 	
 I should use narcotic pain medication only for severe pain, and decrease its use as my pain gets better. Examples are Percocet, Oxycodone, Tylenol 3, Morphine, or Hydromorphone. 	
• I can't drive or drink alcohol while taking narcotic pain medication.	
• For Shoulder Surgery: I should use an icepack for 15-20 minutes every 2 hours for the first 2 weeks to help with pain and swelling.	
I may feel constipated	
• Pain medication can make it hard for me to have a bowel movement.	
I should drink lots of water and eat lots of fruits and vegetables.	
• I shouldn't strain or push too hard when having a bowel movement.	
 I can take a stool softener like Senokot if I haven't had a bowel movement in 2 days. I should ask my pharmacist if I need advice. 	
I may feel tired	
• I should rest when I'm tired. Pain medication can make me feel sleepy.	
I may feel nauseous or not feel hungry	
I should eat smaller meals and snacks more often.	
I can take anti-nausea medication like Gravol if needed.	
These symptoms are not normal	These symptoms
• My incision is bleeding a lot, even after I put pressure on it for 15 mins.	are an emergency
• My temperature is consistently over 38.0°C or I have chills.	
• I have ongoing nausea and vomiting that has lasted more than 24 hours.	I have trouble
I have bad pain that doesn't get better when I take pain medication.	breathing.
• My fingers or nail beds are numb, blue in colour, and cool to touch.	• I have chest pain.
I need to call my surgeon or go to the nearest emergency department if I can't reach my surgeon.	I need to call 911.



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Bow I should care for my arm

- I should keep my arm elevated to help with swelling. I should put a pillow under my elbow when I'm sleeping or sitting to give support.
- I should keep my bandage dry and clean. If I'm told to take the bandage off, I should keep my incision dry.
- If I smoke, I should cut down on smoking to improve healing.
- If I have diabetes, I should continue monitor my sugar levels.
- I shouldn't do any lifting, pushing or pulling with my arm unless instructed to do so.
- I may require physiotherapy. Instructions will be provided to me at my next appointment.

If I have a cast

- I should watch for signs of poor circulation: fingers or nail beds that are numb, blue in colour, and cold to touch.
- I should keep my cast clean and dry and not put anything inside of it.

If I had shoulder surgery

- I can remove the dressing 2-3 days after surgery. I still need to cover my incision when I'm bathing to keep it dry.
- A little bleeding is normal. I can change my dressing. I will be shown how to do this before I leave the hospital.

\mathfrak{F} How my activities will change

Showering

• I can shower 48 hours after my surgery but I need to keep my bandage and incision dry. I should cover the area with plastic bag to keep it dry. If my cast gets wet, I will have to contact the Fracture Clinic to change it by calling 416-469-6384.

Exercise and physical activity

- I should practice deep breathing to keep my lungs healthy.
- I should go for walks often. I should rest and take a break when I need one.
- I shouldn't lift or carry anything with the arm I had surgery on until my surgeon says it's ok.
- I should do these exercises if my bandage or cast isn't in the way:
 - Opening and closing my fingers.
 - Bending and straightening my wrist, hand, or elbow.
 - Bending my neck forward, backward, and to each side.

Eating

• I can eat normally the day after my surgery.

Taking medications

• I should take my regular medications starting the day after my surgery, unless my surgeon has told me not to.





My notes

My medications

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- I was given a list of medications I need to take.
- I was told why I need to take my medications.
- I was told about the side effects of my medications.

My appointments

- I was given a list of my appointments.
- Someone reviewed my list with me.
- I was told about the automated phone call.



