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Orthopedic Surgery & Sports Medicine

GENERAL POSTOP INSTRUCTIONS

Apart from the specific instructions given to you, depending on the type of surgery you have undergone the basic general instructions that you should follow after your surgery are as follows:

- Take pain relieving and other medications as advised. Pain relieving medication should be taken with food. After the first 48 hours of surgery, begin to attempt to wean off of the pain medication.
- Do not drink alcohol, drive a vehicle, operate any machinery or sign a legal document for the first 24 hours after the surgery as the effects of the sedative and/or the anesthesia administered during the surgery may last for the first 24 hours of the surgery.
- Use ice packs to control swelling. However, make sure that the ice bag does not leak into the dressing. Ice packs can be used liberally for the first 48 hours and even later, if required.
- Follow the specific restriction of activity, as advised. Remember that it is easier to prevent developing pain rather than managing it once it has already developed. Rest for a few days after the surgery and keep the operated extremity elevated, above the level of your heart, to control swelling.
- Keep the dressing clean and dry to promote wound healing.
- Try to begin physical therapy a day or two after the surgery. Exercises in the first weeks are usually aimed at regaining joint motion. Strengthening exercises are initiated later. Regular exercises are critical for a successful outcome.
- Eat a healthy diet and drink plenty of non-alcoholic and non-caffeinated drinks. That noted, no specific diet restrictions are needed after most Orthopedic Surgeries
- Schedule your follow-up appointment with your doctor as advised. In general, initial postoperative visits occur at roughly 2wks and 6wks postoperatively. Further follow-up after that time point depends on the specific operation you had performed.

Please consult your doctor immediately if you experience any of the following symptoms:

- Increased drainage from the incision
- Increased redness around the operated area
- Increased swelling that does not decrease with ice and elevation
- Foul odor
- Fever greater than 101°F
- Coldness, numbness or blanched white or bluish color of the fingers or toes
- Sudden calf pain or shortness of breath
- Chest pain

Call 911 anytime you think you may need emergency care.

- For example, call if:
    - You passed out (lost consciousness).
    - You have chest pain, are short of breath, or cough up blood.