

Surgery Center of Pinehurst  
**Dr. James Marino**  
Upper Extremity Fracture Home Instructions

**Rest/Elevation**

The post-operative period is a time to rest and let your body begin the healing process. Try to keep the operative site elevated above the level of your heart. This will help with swelling which will help with pain. Avoid any strenuous activities.

**Ice**

Ice or other cold therapy can be helpful at relieving pain, and reducing swelling and inflammation, especially in the first 24-72 hours after surgery. You may ice your surgical site (on top of the dressing or splint) if you choose to for 20 minutes per hour. Please be careful if sensation has not returned to your extremity.

**Splint/surgical dressing**

Leave the splint and surgical dressing in place until follow up. Make sure to keep the dressing clean and dry. You may shower after surgery as long as you can prevent your affected arm from getting wet. There are some commercial products available, but most people choose to use a bag. This will protect the dressing from splatter, but not from the full force of a shower.

**Medication**

Surgery is painful, especially when fractures are concerned. Take the pain medicine as prescribed. If you had a nerve block, a portion of your arm or hand may be numb. When a tingling sensation begins to return, it is a good time to take your first pain pill. Pain medication can constipate you, so it is recommended that you take an over the counter stool softener, such as Colace (docusate). Also take pain medication with food to limit nausea.

You may not drive while taking pain medication.

If you are experiencing pain beyond what you think should be expected please call the office.

**Therapy**

Formal physical therapy may or may not be a part of your recovery. In general, we do not arrange for therapy until after the first post-operative visit. Unless you have been instructed otherwise, It is okay to move any part of your body that is not immobilized. Specifically, if your fingers are free, it is good to work on some gentle range of motion. Do not do any heavy grasping or lifting.

**Follow up**

Please keep your follow up appointment as scheduled. You will likely be seen in 1-2 weeks after surgery. Sutures will usually be removed at this time. If you have any questions or concerns that need to be addressed prior to that time, please contact the office @ 910-235-2915.