

# Post-Op Instructions for Ulnar Collateral Ligament Reconstruction or Repair

Austin V. Stone, MD, PhD

## DIET

- Begin with clear liquids and light foods (jello, soups, etc.)
- Progress to your normal diet if you are not nauseated

## WOUND CARE

- Maintain your operative dressing, loosen bandage if swelling of the foot and ankle occurs
- Leave your splint on until your first post-operative visit. The splint must be kept clean and dry. **Do not get the splint wet.**

## MEDICATIONS

- Local anesthetics are injected into the wound and knee joint at the time of surgery. This will wear off within 8-12 hours. Patients commonly encounter more pain on the first or second day after surgery when swelling peaks.
- Most patients will require some narcotic pain medication for a short period of time – this can be taken as directed on the bottle.
- Common side effects of the pain medication are nausea, drowsiness, and constipation. To decrease the side effects take the medication with food. We recommend a stool softener such as Colace (docusate) available over the counter and be sure to drink plenty of water.
- If you are having problems with nausea and vomiting, contact the office to possibly have your medications changed.
- **Do not drive a car or operate machinery while taking the narcotic medication.**
- Please avoid alcohol use while taking narcotic pain medication
- If you are having pain that is not being controlled by the pain medication prescribed, you may take an over the counter anti-inflammatory medication such as ibuprofen (600 – 800mg) or naproxen in between doses of pain medication. This will help to decrease pain and decrease the amount of narcotic medication required. Please take as directed on the bottle.
- For 2 weeks following surgery take one aspirin 81mg tablet daily to lower the risk of developing a blood clot after surgery. Please contact the office should severe calf pain occur or significant swelling of the calf or ankle occur.

## **ACTIVITY**

- Formal physical therapy (PT) typically begins after you are seen at your first post-operative appointment 1-2 weeks after surgery. A protocol will be provided at your first post-op visit.
- When sleeping or resting, inclined positions (i.e. reclining chair) and a pillow under the forearm for support may provide better comfort
- Avoid long periods of sitting (without arm supported) or long distance traveling for 2 weeks
- NO driving until instructed otherwise by physician. **Do not drive in splint.**
- May return to sedentary work ONLY or school 3-4 days after surgery, if pain is tolerable

## **Sling**

- Your sling is worn to help support the arm while in the splint.
- When your splint is removed, you will be transitioned to a brace.

## **ICE THERAPY**

- Ice packs will not penetrate the splint and are generally not needed.

## **EXERCISE**

- No exercises or shoulder motion until after your first post-operative visit unless otherwise instructed.
- You may begin wrist, and hand range of motion on the first post-operative day about 2-3 times per day
- Formal physical therapy (PT) will begin after your first post-operative visit

## **EMERGENCIES**

Contact Dr. Stone's office at **859-218-3131** if any of the following are present:

- Painful swelling or numbness (note that some swelling and numbness is normal)
- Unrelenting pain or calf pain
- Fever (over 101° F – it is normal to have a low grade fever (<100°) for the first day or two following surgery) or chills
- Redness around incisions
- Continuous drainage or bleeding from incision
- Difficulty breathing

- Excessive nausea/vomiting

If you have an emergency **after office hours** or on the weekend, contact the office at **859-323-5321** and you will be connected to our pager service. This will connect you with the Physician on call. Do NOT call the Center for Advanced Surgery or Lexington Surgery Center. You can also call University of Kentucky Hospital at 859-323-5000 and ask for the operator to page the orthopedic resident on call.

If you have an emergency that requires immediate attention proceed to the nearest emergency room.

### **FOLLOW-UP CARE/QUESTIONS**

- If you do not already have a post-operative appointment scheduled, please contact our scheduler at 859-218-3131 to schedule.
- Your first post-operative appointment will be scheduled with either Dr. Stone or his designated assistant for a quick wound check, physical therapy protocol and to answer any further questions you have regarding the procedure
- Typically the first post-operative appointment is 7 -14 days following surgery for suture removal.
- If you have any further questions please contact Dr. Stone's office.