Outpatient Elbow Surgery

DIET
- Begin with clear liquids and light foods (jello, soups, etc).
- Progress to your normal diet if you are not nauseated.
- Take pain medicine with food – crackers, bread, etc.

WOUND CARE
- Maintain your operative dressing, loosen bandage if swelling or tingling.
- It is normal to bleed some from the surgery site. If blood soaks onto the bandage, do not become alarmed; reinforce with additional dressing.
- If blood saturates more than 2 bandages call Borgess Orthopedics at (269)343-1535.
- Keep splints or casts clean and dry. Do not remove.
- If no splint or cast, you may remove surgical dressing on the 2nd post-operative day. If minimal drainage is present, apply bandaids over incisions. Do not use antibiotic ointment.
- To avoid infection, keep surgical incisions clean and dry. You may shower on the 2nd day. No immersion of operative arm until instructed by staff. If splint or cast is on, cover with a plastic bag.

MEDICATIONS
- Pain medication may be injected into the wound and knee joint during surgery. This will wear off within 8 to 12 hours.
- The anesthesiologist’s regional nerve block usually wears off within 18 to 24 hours.
- Aleve 500mg 2 times per day may be taken for pain if you do not have a history of bleeding or ulcers.
- Some patients will require narcotic pain medication for a short period of time. This can be taken as per directions on the bottle. Potential narcotic side effects include: constipation, nausea, vomiting, sleepiness.
- If nausea and vomiting continue for more than 12-24 hours, contact the office to have your medication changed (269)343-1535.
- Do not drive a car or operate machinery while taking the prescription pain medication.
- Increase vegetables, whole grains, and water intake to decrease risk of constipation related to pain medications.
- Drink a full glass of water with every dose of medication (prescription or over the counter) and take with food.

ACTIVITY
- When sleeping or resting, elevate the extremity with the support of a pillow to reduce swelling and pain.
- Do not engage in impact activities which increase pain/swelling over the first 7-10 days following surgery.
- Avoid long periods of sitting or long distance traveling for 2 weeks.
- No driving or operating heavy machinery until you are off all prescription pain medications.
- You may return to sedentary work or school 1-3 days after surgery, if pain is tolerable.
EXERCISES:
- Gentle wrist, hand, and finger motions.

ICE THERAPY
- Begin icing immediately after surgery using the compression machine or cold packs.

EMERGENCIES
- Contact Borgess Orthopedics (269)343-1535 if any of the following are present:
  - Painful swelling or numbness, tingling, color change, or coolness in the ankle or foot
  - Unrelenting pain
  - Fever over 101 (It is normal to have a low grade fever for the first day or two following surgery)
  - Redness or worsening pain around incisions
  - Continuous drainage or bleeding from incision (a small amount of drainage is expected)
  - Difficulty breathing, wheezing
  - Excessive nausea/vomiting causing inability to keep anything down for 12-24 hours
  - Inability to urinate

WHAT TO EXPECT AT YOUR FIRST POST OPERATIVE VISIT
- Splint or cast removed if needed.
- Suture/stitches will be removed and new bandage applied.
- Follow up Xrays will be taken if indicated.
- New hinged brace fitted if needed.
- Next follow-up visit will usually be scheduled for 4-6 weeks