

Elbow Open Reduction and Internal Fixation

How do you repair a displaced elbow fracture?

If surgery is recommended, then the Elbow will be repaired using a stainless steel or titanium plate(s) and screws. The plate and screws will hold the elbow in place while it heals. It is strong enough to allow you to have elbow range of motion without disrupting the fracture site.

Length of Stay

This is usually done as an outpatient surgery, but some patients may require an overnight stay . You will be discharged home once your pain is controlled. You will need to have someone to drive you home after you have been discharged.

Anesthesia

Patients have general anesthesia, which means you are asleep. The anesthesiologist will speak to you on the day of surgery.

Incision

You will have an incision across the backside of your elbow . Once the incision has healed, it is usually very thin and not very noticeable.

Pain

You will have pain medication prescribed for you prior to discharge. After the nerve block wears off you will have discomfort. Most of the pain is related to your very swollen shoulder. That swelling will resolve in 24-48 hours. It is important to stay on top of the pain medication. Most patients receive Toradol, which is a strong anti-inflammatory. Begin taking this medication when you get home. The Narcotic you are prescribed should be used as a rescue medication as needed. For the first 2 days it is advised that you take 1 of these pills around the clock to stay on top of the pain. If it is too strong, you can take Extra strength Tylenol in its place.

Dressings

Your arm will be placed in a sling and long arm splint (like a half cast) prior to leaving the operating room. You are to remain in your splint for the first 2 weeks after surgery until you are seen by Dr. Acevedo in your post op visit. You may cover the splint and dressings with a plastic trash bag to keep them dry while showering.

Driving

You are not permitted to drive while you are in the splint. It is not usually safe to drive until 6 weeks after surgery .

Physical Therapy

Please make an appointment with a therapist ASAP to be seen at 2 weeks after your surgery. Physical therapy is crucial to regaining motion and use of your arm. Elbows tend to get really stiff after a trauma and surgery. Performing the exercises daily is essential for a good recovery.

Restrictions

Recovery from an elbow fracture surgery is about three months. During that time you will have some restrictions on the use of your operative arm.

Day of surgery to Week 2: no use of arm, out of work

Weeks 2-6: opposite hand work only . The arm can be used for activities of daily living , and for range of motion exercises

Months 2.5-3: no lifting or carrying greater than 15 lbs, only occasional reaching

> 3 Months: No restrictions. No Contact Sports for 6 months.

Follow Up Appt

You should have had your follow up appointment made at the time of your preoperative appointment. You should be seen at around 10-14 days.

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