

Arthroscopic Elbow Synovectomy

What is elbow synovitis?

The elbow joint can develop inflammation from certain inflammatory conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis. The synovium is the lining of the elbow joint. The synovium can become inflamed and is then termed "synovitis"

How do you treat the elbow synovitis?

Elbow synovitis can be treated with elbow arthroscopy if the arthritis is not severe. Unlike other parts of the body, arthroscopic treatment of an arthritic elbow can reliably improve motion and relieve pain. Dr. Acevedo uses a small camera (arthroscope) to see inside the elbow joint. Using special instruments Dr. Acevedo will remove the inflamed synovium to improve your motion and pain.

Length of Stay

This is same day surgery. You will need to have someone who can take you home.

Anesthesia

This surgery is performed under general anesthesia, which means you are asleep.

Incisions

You will have 4-5 small incisions around your shoulder. They will be < 1 cm long.

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.

Sling

Your arm will be placed in a sling prior to leaving the operating room. You are to remain in your sling for the first 48 hours after surgery. You may come out of the sling to perform range of motion exercises for the elbow, wrist, and hand.

Dressings

You will go home with dressings and gauze. After 3 days you may remove the dressings. There will be small black sutures (stitches) that will be taken out at your first post operative appointment 10-14 days after your surgery.

Physical Therapy

Please make an appointment with a therapist ASAP to be seen as soon as the 3rd day after your surgery. Physical therapy is crucial to regaining motion and use of your arm. Elbows tend to get really stiff after surgery. Performing the exercises daily is essential for a good recovery. If you prefer to perform the rehabilitation at home on your own, Dr Acevedo can give you a program with the MyHealthTrack app.

Restrictions

Recovery from elbow arthroscopic surgery is 1 to 3 months. Restrictions will be dependent on the type of work you do and sports you play. You will not be able to bear weight on the operative arm for 12 weeks. Sports allowed at 5 months.

Pictures

Dr. Acevedo will take photos during your surgery. Please bring those pictures to your first postoperative visit. Dr. Acevedo will review them with you and discuss exactly what was done in your elbow.

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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