

## POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS: DISTAL HUMERUS FRACTURE FIXATION

### Pain Medications

- In most cases local or regional nerve blocks will provide 8-12 hours of numbness. As soon as you start to feel the numbness wearing off, begin taking oral pain medication.
- Take **Tylenol** 500mg one tab every 8 hours.
- Take **Aleve (Naproxen)** 220mg two tabs (440mg total) every 12 hours with food.
- If you still have pain after Tylenol and Aleve/Naproxen, take one **narcotic** tab (5mg/325mg).
- If you still have pain after all of the above, take a second narcotic tab.
- Keep in mind Norco has Tylenol in it (325mg). If you take an extra narcotic, then skip a dose of Tylenol. **DO NOT exceed 3500mg of Tylenol over 24 hours.**
- It is illegal to drive or operate machinery with narcotic medications.
- Do not combine alcohol or other sedatives with narcotic medications.
- You do not need to take pain medications once you no longer have pain. You should stop the Norco first (usually 2-3 days), then wean off the others over the next week or two.

### Other Medications

- Take **Zofran** as needed for nausea (usually associated with anesthesia/narcotic meds).
- Take an over-the-counter stool softener (Docusate/Senna/Miralax) as needed for constipation.

### Activity

- You may NOT bear any weight on or lift anything with your operative extremity.
- Elevate your operative extremity above the heart as much as possible to decrease swelling.
- It may be helpful to sleep on a recliner or with pillows supporting the arm.

### Recovery Equipment

- You should wear the sling at all times day and night.
- You may remove the sling for hygiene.

### Cold Therapy

- We recommend cold therapy use as much as possible in the first two weeks.
- Cold therapy units may be used continuously as instructed.
- Ice packs should be applied 30 minutes at a time, with 30 minutes off between applications.
- Do not apply ice directly to the skin to avoid burning.

### Recovery Exercises

- You may perform wrist and hand exercises as tolerated.
- You will begin physical therapy around two weeks after surgery, after your first postoperative visit.

**Diet:** Please refer to your preoperative packet instructions.

**Incision Care:** Please refer to your preoperative packet instructions.

**Emergencies:** Please refer to your preoperative packet instructions.