

PETER HONEY

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Hand & Upper Limb Surgery Knee & Sports Injury Surgery

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ELBOW SURGERY – Post Operative Instructions

1. Keep your hand and elbow as high as possible at all times. The best way to do this when standing or sitting upright is to hold the hand across the chest in front of the other shoulder. When laying, rest elbow on a pillow. Elevation is the most important way to control both **pain** and **swelling**.
2. Keep the dressing clean, absolutely dry, and undisturbed at all times. It will be changed at you first post operative visit.
3. Move any joints that are not immobilised through as full a range of motion as possible, as often as possible. Especially pay attention to the **shoulder** reaching all the way over the head. Gently flex and extend the wrist and fingers.
4. You may apply ice in a bag over the area of operation to help with **pain** control. This technique is usually only effective during the first several days after surgery.
5. If you have any new numbness in your fingers, fingertips turning white or blue, or see new bright red bleeding coming through the dressing, call the doctor **immediately**. If you develop chest pain, shortness of breath, or other serious or acute symptoms, call **000**. If any of your usual medical problems flare up after surgery, call the doctor **normally** takes care of those problems for you.
6. If your anaesthesia involved a breathing tube of any kind, you may be hoarse, have a sore throat, and even spit up small amounts of blood.
7. Do not try to eat too much too soon. This may result in nausea due to the narcotic pain medications and anaesthesia.
8. Your pain medication prescription has been written for well more medication than you should require before you next office visit. If, however, you feel you must reach me regarding your prescriptions or post op medications prior to the next office visit, you **must plan ahead** and call during regular office hours.
9. After having has surgery, no pain medication is capable of taking away **all** the pain. But taking the pills on a regular 4 hour intervals without missing any doses will give you the best chance of having less pain.
10. Your first follow up visit with the doctor should be in approximately 10- 14 days. Call the office if you are unsure about your appointment. It is possible you will be seen by a hand therapist before you see your doctor. This is usually arranged prior to surgery. You should not drive a motor vehicle or operate machinery until after your post operative visit.