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Elbow Contracture Release Rehab Overview

- POD 8-10: first postop visit for assessment of motion, sutures not out until POD#14
- ROM only until full ROM is achieved
- Strengthen after 3 months of therapy
- Anticipate near full ROM by 4-6 months

Rehabilitation Instructions after Elbow Release Surgery

1. **CPM Machine:** This is the motion machine that is used immediately after surgery and overnight in the hospital. A similar machine will be delivered and set-up in your home for use after discharge from the hospital. Usually, the CPM is used for one month after surgery.
 - **Use CPM two times a day. Once in the morning and once in the evening, for 30-45 minutes each time.**
 - Slowly increase the machine to maximum flexion and extension. You do not have to go fast.
 - You should not use the CPM more than this unless you discuss it with us. Performing exercises on your own, as learned in therapy, are very important and should be done as often as possible.
2. **JAS Splints (Static Progressive Splints):** These are the splints that you use to slowly stretch your elbow into full extension and flexion. You will need to be fitted and instructed in the use of these splints prior to your operation. Usually, these splints are used for 3 to 4 months after surgery.
 - **Use JAS splint for extension each morning for 30 minutes**
 - **Use JAS splint for flexion each evening for 30 minutes.**
 - Slowly increase the brace every 5 minutes. This should not be done too fast. It should not hurt – we simply want to stretch the elbow.
3. **Weighted Stretches:** You will learn this exercise in therapy before



you go home from the hospital. Use a 2-pound cuff weight on your wrist.

- **Perform weighted stretch exercise two times a day (morning and evening) for 10-15 minutes each time.**
 - Relax and let the weight stretch your elbow straight (extended)
4. **Therapy:** Outpatient occupational/physical therapy should be started the Monday after surgery. You will need to arranged/scheduled before your surgery. You will need to attend regular appointments for 3 to 5 months after surgery in order to maintain your elbow motion, monitor your progress, and prevent swelling and stiffness.
- Therapy will be attended 3-5 times a week for the first few weeks. Depending on your progress, visits may then decrease up to 2 times a week until discharge.
 - Therapy will focus on motion, not strength. Typically, strengthening exercises are not allowed until 3-4 months after surgery.
5. **Home Exercises:** You will learn elbow exercises in therapy. These involve both ACTIVE (using your own arm muscles to move the elbow) and PASSIVE (using your unaffected arm to move the elbow) exercises.
- **Perform home exercises at least two times a day. You should do these as often as possible throughout the day. More is better.**
 - Use and Ace wrap or compressive sleeve at all times to prevent swelling. Your therapist should provide you with this at your first visit.
6. **Medications:** You will be provided with medicine prescriptions when you leave the hospital. Pain medication and Indocin are typically prescribed.
- Indocin (Indomethacin) is used to prevent bone formation about the elbow and limit inflammation. It should be taken twice a day with food and Pepcid for 2 weeks. If you have any side effects or concerns about the Indocin, please contact our office before you stop taking it.
 - Pain medicines are used so that you can be diligent in your rehabilitation program. Pain about your elbow should not stop you from performing any of this program. If you have problems, or do not feel your pain is well controlled, you should call our office right away.