



Patient & Family Guide
2015

After Orthopedic Day Surgery



www.nshealth.ca

After Orthopedic Day Surgery

This pamphlet will answer some of your questions about your care at home.

If you have any questions, please ask.
We are here to help you.

What did I have done?

The name of your operation is:

What was found?

Follow-up care

Return appointment:

Yes

No

Doctor: _____

Date (if known): _____

Orthopedic Clinic:

902-473-4166, 4th floor Halifax Infirmary

How will I feel?

Most people feel tired and have some soreness or pain from their operation. Some people may feel sick to their stomach and have stiff or sore muscles.

What can I do?

- Rest quietly today.
- Tomorrow, be up and about unless told otherwise by your surgeon.
- Do not drive a car or operate machinery for 24 hours.
- Do not sign any legal documents or important papers for 24 hours.
- Do not drink alcohol.
- You should not be responsible for small children or be a main caregiver.
- You should have a responsible adult stay with you overnight and for the first 24 hours after an anesthetic.
- If you have questions or concerns related specifically to your Anesthesia care, please call 902-473-4326. If it is after business hours, leave a confidential voicemail and your call will be returned.

When can I eat?

Follow the instructions given to you by the nurse or surgeon.

- When you are able, it is best to start with clear juices, pop, tea, clear soups, crackers, or toast. Starting tomorrow, you may eat normally.
- **Do not drink alcohol for 24 hours.**

Discomfort

You may be given a prescription for pain pills. You may try Tylenol®. You may also try anti-inflammatory (ibuprofen or Advil®) pills to prevent swelling. **Do not drink alcohol while taking pain pills.**

You can expect to have some swelling – this is normal. You can use ice packs (or frozen peas) every 4 hours while you are awake. They should not stay on for more than 30 minutes at a time. Continue while you have swelling (3–5 days).

If you had an operation on an arm/hand or leg/foot, place it up on pillows above the level of your heart. This should help with the pain, aching, or throbbing.

When can I drive?

Do not drive a car for 24 hours. Be sure you are pain-free and can handle the limb or area comfortably. Follow the instructions given to you by your surgeon.

Please note, prescription pain medications containing narcotics can make you sleepy and you should not drive while taking these.

When can I return to work?

Talk about returning to work with your surgeon.

What if I have diagnosed sleep apnea?

For ALL sleep apnea patients:

- Sleep in a semi-upright position or on your side for the first 24 hours after your surgery. Don't sleep lying flat on your back.
- Use only medications prescribed to you by your doctor.
- Do not drink alcohol.
- Use your dental device for sleep if used prior to surgery.
- If your pain gets worse and you are using more prescribed pain medication, contact your doctor or go to the Emergency Department.

For patients who use CPAP machines:

- Use your CPAP machine whenever you are sleeping.
- Use your CPAP machine when you are resting or napping during the day while taking pain medication.

Activity

- Allowed up as comfortable
- Keep the operated limb elevated
- No weight bearing on operated limb
- Crutches/cane needed
- Partial weight bearing with crutches

Don't do any strenuous exercises or activity until after your follow-up.

Dressing

- Leave in place until your next doctor's visit
- Can be removed after _____ days
- Do not shower for _____ days.
- After _____ days, with a properly covered cast or dressing, you may have a shower. For best results, buy a cast cover for your arm or leg at a local pharmacy. If this costs too much, try wrapping a plastic bag over your dressing or cast to keep it dry while showering.
- Do not soak in the tub or swim until after your next doctor's visit.

Stitches or staples (if you have them)

- › Your stitches or staples can be removed after _____days
 - By your family doctor
 - By your surgeon

Steri-Strips® are cloth tape over your incision (cut). They should stay in place for 7-10 days. You may cover them with a Band Aid® so your incision is not rubbed by your clothing.

If there is any bleeding:

- Place your hand over the dressing and press firmly.
- Place the affected part up on pillows above the level of your heart, if possible.
- Rest quietly until the bleeding stops.

Contact your doctor if the bleeding continues. In case of severe bleeding, go to the Emergency Department immediately.

Things to watch for

Contact your surgeon or family doctor right away if you have:

- › Fever/chills
- › Drainage from the incision that has a colour or bad smell
- › Edges of incision come apart
- › Redness

- › Numbness or tingling in the operated limb
- › Unusual colour such as white or blue fingers or toes of operated limb
- › Pain not helped by medication

Go to the nearest Emergency Department at your local hospital if you have:

- › Pain in the calf of your leg that does not go away with movement or massage
- › Shortness of breath
- › Pain in your chest

If you have a concern and you cannot make contact with your surgeon's office or family doctor, please go to your nearest Emergency Department for assessment.

Looking for more health information?

Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.
For more information go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

*Nova Scotia Health Authority promotes a smoke-free, vape-free, and scent-free environment.
Please do not use perfumed products. Thank you!*

Nova Scotia Health Authority
www.nshealth.ca

*Prepared by: Same Day Surgery Unit, Halifax ©
Designed by: Nova Scotia Health Authority, Central Zone Patient Education Team
Printed by: Dalhousie University Print Centre*

The information in this brochure is for informational and educational purposes only.
The information is not intended to be and does not constitute healthcare or medical advice.
If you have any questions, please ask your healthcare provider.

WE85-1599 Created November 2015

The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.