

WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER TOTAL ELBOW REPLACEMENT

Your elbow should feel better each day. If pain becomes difficult to control, or if you notice increasing redness, drainage or swelling, please contact us immediately. We can be reached during the day at 650-736-9585. After hours call the Stanford Hospital operator at 650-723-4000 and ask for clinical advice services. If unable to reach us in an emergency, please go to the emergency room at Stanford Hospital. If Stanford is too far travel, or if time is an issue, please report to a local emergency department nearest to your home or to a cooperating local orthopedic surgeon.

Day 0-14:

Your arm will be placed in a splint and wound VAC dressing after surgery, to limit swelling. You will leave the arm in the splint, and the dressing in place, until the batteries run out at 1 week after surgery. When you hear the “beeping” sound which signals the battery is done, you can cut off the main tube with scissors and throw the battery unit away. The splint/dressing should remain intact on your arm.

The most important thing to do in the first 2 weeks is to elevate the elbow to limit swelling and pain.



Week 2:

Remove the splint and there will be a wound check in clinic.

You can now use your new elbow, with flexion and extension, gradually improving over the next few months.

Time to recovery:

Time off from work is usually between 2-12 weeks, depending on the nature of the job. Generally, pain should be resolved by 3 months.

Antibiotics after Total Elbow Replacement

You will need to take prophylactic antibiotics before dental procedures, colonoscopies or other invasive procedures. This consists of **Amoxicillin 2 grams** one hour prior to procedure. If you have a penicillin allergy you should take **Cipro 750 mg** one hour prior to procedure. Your dentist or your surgeon can prescribe this. You can call the office if you have questions about antibiotic therapy following your surgery.

IMPORTANT FACTS:

After your surgery, you will have a prosthetic component in your elbow, which is susceptible to loosening and failure over time. Therefore, you will be permanently restricted from lifting anything greater than 2 pounds repetitively and no lifting greater than 10 pounds in a single event.