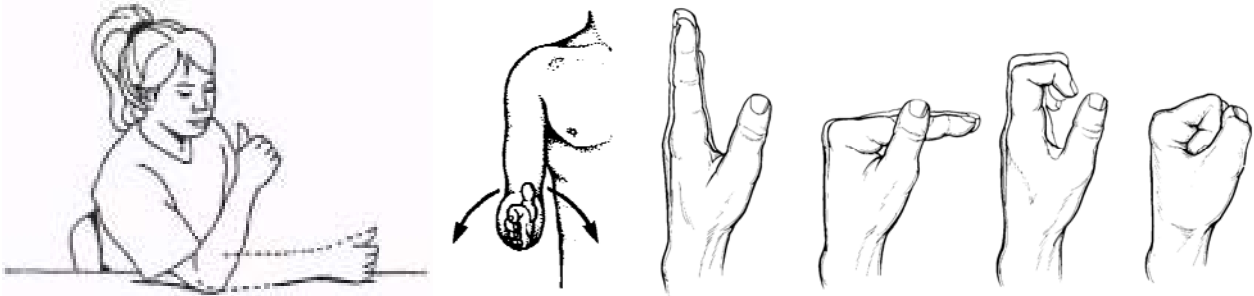


ELBOW SURGERY

Local anaesthetic has been injected around the site of operation and therefore this area and possibly some fingers will remain numb for up to ten hours after surgery. As this effect wears off, it may well be worth taking some pain-killers.

Hand elevation is important to prevent swelling and stiffness of the fingers. Please remember not either to walk with your hand dangling or to sit with your hand held in your lap. It is fine, however, to lower your hand for light use and you should get back to normal light activities as soon as possible as guided by common sense. There are a number of exercises you should do to prevent stiffness in shoulder, elbow, forearm, wrist and hand.



You have been discharged with a supportive dressing, consisting of a light adhesive dressing covered and supported by a wool and crepe bandage. Please remove the top dressing tomorrow, which will allow you to get the elbow moving better. The adhesive dressing can be removed after seven days. There obviously will be some swelling and bruising around the wound but this is normal. Look out for any redness or tenderness in the area around the wound that might indicate an infection. Do not apply antiseptic but ask for medical advice.

Once dressings are removed, it is safe to get the wound wet in a bath or shower. The wound and the surrounding skin can become dry and if this occurs, briefly immerse the region in water to which a small quantity of baby-oil has been added. Commercial moisturisers are best avoided until wounds have healed as they can cause irritation. Your stitches will be dissolving by about two weeks after surgery but wounds are not sealed until a further week. During this time, avoid contact with livestock and agricultural environments, including gardening.

You can drive if you are comfortable and have regained good movement and if you have sufficient power to control the vehicle. Timing of your return to work is variable according to your occupation and you should discuss this. Once healed, the scar may become lumpy, firm, tender and pink. The intensity and length of the period of "scar immaturity" is very variable but it usually settles after about three months. It can be helped by massaging the scar and surrounding area firmly with the moisturizing cream.

We have not arranged for follow-up but would like to be involved in dealing with any problems. If you are worried about the wound, stiffness, pain or any other symptoms, ring the hospital for advice, review or an appointment.