

## **Post-Operative Instructions for Humeral Osteotomy**

### *Purpose of surgery*

The goal of the operation is to 'untwist' the humerus, and by doing so, allow your child to rotate their arm externally.

### *What to expect after surgery?*

Your child will have a large cast that is called an Upper Extremity SPICA cast. This cast will wrap around their torso and extend up across the operative shoulder all the way across the wrist. It is designed to protect the plate/screws used to hold the osteotomy secure. This cast will stay on for 4-6 weeks until there is radiographic evidence of bone healing. Believe it or not, your child will adjust to this cast quickly. For older children, I may avoid the need for the SPICA cast by using a longer plate. In this case, your child's arm will be supported by a sling.

### *What should you do to help your child recover?*

Encourage your child to keep their fingers moving. Allow them to return to 'normal' activities as soon as they feel comfortable (see the next section for restrictions).

Keep your child's pain under control. You can expect the worst of the discomfort to be over after about 2-3 days. Please make sure you are giving your child pain medicine as prescribed for the first day, and then you can decide on day 2-3 and beyond how much he/she needs. I will not be surprised if he/she still needs prescription pain medicine to some degree into day 2 and 3 – they may even need it on occasion after that. By day 2 or 3, you can try over the counter children's ibuprofen (Advil™, Motrin™). You can also try children's acetaminophen (Tylenol™) but be aware that the prescription pain medicine also contains acetaminophen, and I do not want him/her to get too much. Please refer to the website for general guidelines on pain control for further information ([www.HandCenterGA.com](http://www.HandCenterGA.com)).

### *How should you take care of your child's dressing?*

The cast must stay clean and dry. You will need to towel bathe your child as there is no way to water-proof the cast. Please refer to the website for general cast precautions and helpful hints ([www.HandCenterGA.com](http://www.HandCenterGA.com)). Alternatively, your older child will have a 'soft' dressing covering the wound. That dressing may be removed after 7 days – it will be covered by a non-adherent patch, gauze, a cotton-type wrap and then an ACE wrap. The wound itself will be protected by what looks like a piece of tape – leave that on as it sticks to the wound to protect it. It is OK, then, to wet the wound in a shower with running water and clean the wound gently with soap and water. The sticky tape will fall off on its own. Keep the wound covered otherwise to keep it clean and dry. Please avoid using salves like Bacitracin™ or Neosporin™. The wound also does not need air to heal, just cleanliness.

What should concern you?

Please refer to our website ([www.HandCenterGA.com](http://www.HandCenterGA.com)) for helping you to understand our general concerns following any operation. If your child is not moving their fingers – please inform me. Also, if you notice any areas of skin around the cast that look chaffed or ‘raw,’ please inform me as well. Remember, there is always someone available day/night, weekends and holidays at 404-255-0226.

When should you come in for your first Post-operative visit?

Your child’s first visit will be within 7-10 days of the operation. That visit should be arranged during your pre-operative appointment. If not, call 404-255-0226 to make that appointment. So you understand, we will simply be checking the cast and making any necessary adjustments. I will not remove the cast for 4-6 weeks from surgery. If your older child had a soft dressing, I will check the wound, and start him/her off with very simple and gentle exercises to help them start recovering.

Will he/she need therapy?

A formal, supervised therapy program is critical to help your child maximize the results of the operation. At the first post-operative visit, I will provide you with the referral to either one of our own therapists, a local therapist, or a qualified therapist convenient to you.

The SPICA cast will come off at 4-6 weeks, and therapy should commence within a week thereafter. We will replace the cast with a sling to act as a transitional device from full time casting to no casting.

What activities can your child do?

While your child will start engaging in their normal activities as soon as they feel comfortable, I will ask you to place specific restrictions upon them. They can return to daycare or school as soon as they are comfortable but should avoid outdoor play if there is risk they may get the cast dirty/muddy. They should not engage in any activities where there is a likelihood of falling, like, sports, physical education, or playing on playground equipment. This is because the SPICA cast prevents them from using their arms to brace themselves properly should they fall – and, I do not want them falling with enough force to injure themselves. The same ‘rules’ apply to your older child.