

After surgery

Recovery

Your surgeon will speak to your family/significant other in the waiting room after your surgery. After your initial recovery, your family may see you in your post-op area in the Alpine Surgery Center. If you have had a general anesthetic, the initial recovery is longer and lasts about one hour. You may be in the recovery room longer with certain regional blocks.

The recovery area can be cool and bright. If you feel cold ask for a warm blanket or if the lights are too bright we will be happy to turn them down.

Expect to have pain after surgery. Your nurse will ask you to rate your pain on a scale 0-10 (0 is no pain and 10 is the worst pain). This rating is used to give you the proper pain medication.

Discharge

After surgery, your nurse will assess your readiness to go home. Before discharge, you will be given specific guidelines about:

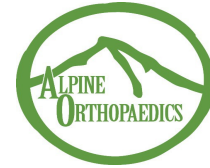
- ✓ Incision, bandage & dressing care
- ✓ Diet
- ✓ Activity
- ✓ Medications
- ✓ When to call your surgeon
- ✓ Who to call with questions
- ✓ Follow-up appointments

Your discharge will be based on:

- Safety with crutches (able to ambulate and ascend/descend stairs)
- Clinically/Medically Stable
- Adequate pain control
- Adequate control of potential nausea

Once all of these goals are met, you will be discharged from the Alpine Surgery Center. If you have any questions or concerns about your follow-up care, please ask the nurse.

Remember that you must have a responsible adult to assist you in getting home safely. **We recommend you have a responsible adult stay with you for the first 24 hours after your surgery.**



What To Expect After My Surgery

You may have mild to moderate bruising and swelling initially (day one) that will start at the surgical site.

Bruising and swelling are normal after surgery and vary from one individual to another.

Bruising and swelling may continue to increase over the first two weeks after your surgery.

HOW TO DECREASE BRUISING, SWELLING AND PAIN

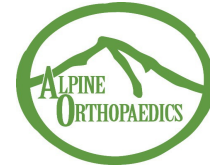
RICE – Rest, Ice, Compress, and Elevate

Rest – We want you to be up and moving but do this in moderation. We recommend you rest for the first 2-5 days after surgery. Do not over do it. Increased activity means increased swelling. By decreasing the swelling early, you will recover more quickly

Ice – Ice as much as possible the first week. Ice is a great anti-inflammatory tool and helps minimize swelling and pain. You may apply ice packs over the surgical site. Do not apply ice directly to bare skin. Use a thin towel between the ice bag and skin.

Compress – The TED hose compression stockings provide compression and help minimize swelling for lower extremity surgery. The Ted hose compression stockings also help prevent Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT's) and are important if you had an upper extremity surgery. Keep the stockings on for 2 weeks. They can be washed and air-dried as needed. You may take them off for 2 hours/day.

Elevate – Elevating your extremity will help reduce swelling. To reduce significant amounts of swelling elevate your extremity as much as possible. Do this with your extremity above the level of your heart. If you had shoulder surgery elevate your head and shoulder in a semi reclined position, such as a recliner, or sitting up in bed with pillows.



Outpatient Physical Therapy / Occupational Therapy

You are responsible for setting up your outpatient physical therapy visits. We encourage you to set up an appointment prior to your surgery for pre operative teaching.

You will be given an outpatient physical therapy prescription the day of your surgery.

You will go to outpatient physical therapy until you meet your goals. Select an outpatient facility which is convenient for you and takes your insurance. You need to check with your insurance company to make sure physical therapy is covered. You may also want to work with a physical therapist you have worked with previously. We will provide you with a list of facilities.

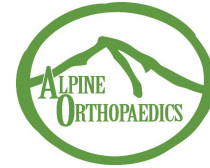
- **Physiotherapy Associates-Gunnison**
112 West Spencer, Suite C
Gunnison, CO 81230
Office 970-641-2266
Fax 970-641-0334

- **Physiotherapy Associates-Crested Butte**
223 Elk Avenue, Suite 202
Crested Butte, CO 81224
Office 970-349-9997
Fax 970-349-9998

- **Heights Physical Therapy**
718 N. Main Street
Gunnison, CO 81230
Office 970-641-3298

- **Gunnison Valley Rehabilitation**
711 North Taylor Street
Gunnison, CO 81320
Office 970-641-7248
Fax 970-641-7216

- **Teton Hand Therapy**
Gunnison Valley Hospital
Gunnison, CO 81230
Office 970-901-5642



- Back to Life Physical Therapy
427 Bellview, Suite 101
Crested Butte, CO 81224

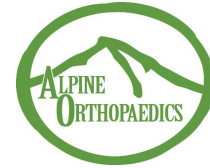
- Peak Performance Therapy-Telluride
Unit c-1, Cimarron Lodge
300 S. Mahoney Dr.
Telluride, CO 81435
Office 970-728-1888
Fax 970-369-4671

- Peak Performance Therapy-Mountain Village
136 Country Club Drive
Telluride, CO 81435
Office 970-728-6800 ext 6744

- Balanced Physical Therapy
317 East Colorado
Telluride, CO 81435
Office 970-728-8948
Fax 970-728-8953

- In Motion Therapy
611 East Star Court, Suite B
Montrose, CO 81401
Office 970-249-1646
Fax 970-249-8899

- Rocky Mountain Therapy Services
114 Apollo Road
Montrose, CO 81401
Office 970-249-6920
Fax 970-249-6142



Frequently Asked Questions

If you have concerns/questions, please read the following information before calling the office.

What if I have swelling after surgery?

It is very common to experience swelling after surgery. Sometimes, you will not swell until several days after your surgery. Remember that your body is healing from the surgery and some swelling is normal. The more activities and physical therapy you perform, the more swelling you may experience.

With that said, we do want you to remain active and participate in therapy. But, when sitting and resting, you can decrease the swelling by elevating your surgical site and using ice. It is important to elevate your extremity to help reduce your swelling.

You should be concerned if you have swelling for several days that is accompanied by redness and heat or coolness in your surgical site, or if the swelling does not resolve after elevating. If this is the case, please contact your surgeon.

Will I have bruising after surgery?

Yes, you may have some degree of bruising after surgery, but everyone is different. Some will only experience bruising around the incision; others will have bruising on the extremity. Both are considered normal and will resolve over 10-14 days.

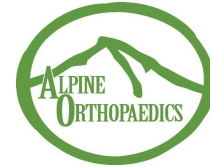
What should I expect my activity level to be?

Every patient is different. Every day you should be increasing your activity level, but let your pain level and swelling be your guide. You will make 90 % of your recovery in the first 4 to 6 weeks, and the remaining 10% will come with the next 6 months.

At some point, many patients overdo their activities and therefore take a few steps back in their recovery. You may have increased swelling or discomfort if this happens. You need to become concerned if you cannot control your pain with rest and pain medications.

What if I am having problems sleeping?

Make sure that your pain is well controlled throughout the day. During the day be careful about taking naps. It is common to experience sleep disturbances during the first few days post – operatively. If you continue to have sleep disturbances, contact your Primary Care Provider.



When can I shower or bathe?

Depending on your surgery, this time frame may vary. Please refer to your post-op instructions for your specific time to shower or bathe.

What about using a hot tub or whirlpool?

Because of the heat and bacteria in the water, we do not want you to use a hot tub or whirlpool, or bath, until cleared by your surgeon or the surgeon's PA-C.

I just had surgery. What positions can I sleep in?

Patients undergoing shoulder surgery might find comfort in sleeping in a recliner the first few nights after surgery or propped up in bed with pillows. Ensure that your surgical extremity is elevated above your heart.

When can I restart the meds I was told to stop prior to surgery?

You may resume your medications once your surgery is completed. Please refer to section on Diet and medications for do's/don'ts of post-op medicines.

Now that I am no longer requiring narcotic pain medication, what can I take if I should experience discomfort?

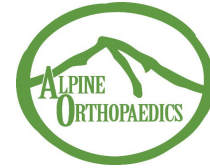
NSAIDS (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) such as Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin or Aleve) or Tylenol can be taken for discomfort, unless your Primary Care Physician has instructed you not to take these medications. Please remember Tylenol may not be allowed after surgery depending on the post operative pain medications you are prescribed .

What should I do if I think my surgical site is infected?

As stated above, you will experience some bruising and swelling after surgery. In addition, you may notice a small amount of yellowish or pinkish drainage. You should contact the office if you have a large amount of drainage that has saturated through your clothing, if the drainage is yellowish/cloudy or if you are running a consistent temperature of 101.0 or higher. If you have redness or streaking redness above the surgical site or dressing. If you have a new onset of pain that cannot be controlled by your pain medications. These symptoms do not mean that you are infected, but are symptoms we should be notified of.

What should I do to avoid constipation?

You may start a stool softener, Colace (Docusate Sodium), morning and night as needed, while taking narcotic pain medications. Stop the stool softener if you start to experience loose or watery stools. If you continue to have symptoms of constipation you can take Milk of Magnesia, which is a mild oral laxative.

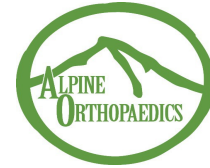


What do I do if I am nauseated?

Take Phenergan as prescribed for nausea/vomiting. Rest your stomach for several hours. Then try ice chips, crackers and a simple diet. A BRAT diet is recommended, which is bananas, rice, applesauce and toast. Once your body can tolerate these foods, you may advance slowly to a regular diet.

When To Call Your Surgeon

- Fever above 101
- Increased drainage or swelling
- Pain not controlled by pain medication
- Swelling in foot or calf that is accompanied by pain and/or shortness of breath, coolness or decreased sensation in foot.
- Persistent nausea and/or vomiting.
- Foul odor from incision site.
- Redness or streaking redness above surgical site or dressing.



Important Phone Numbers

If you have a Medical Emergency please call 911 or go to the nearest Emergency Room!

Alpine Orthopaedics “On Call” Phone 970-596-4786 if after regular office hours, Monday-Friday 8am to 5pm or on Weekends.

- Alpine Orthopaedics-Gunnison 970-641-6788/ Fax 970-641-0282
- Alpine Orthopaedics-Crested Butte 970-349-1046/ Fax 970-349-1049
- Alpine Surgery Center 970-641-4522/ Fax 970-641-0282

- Michelle, RN - Clinical Coordinator 970-641-6788/ Fax 970-641-0282
- Brenda Creitz, CRNA 970-275-0492

- Gunnison Valley Hospital 970-641-1456
- Gunnison Valley Hospital Nurses Station 970-641-7244
- Montrose Memorial Hospital 970-249-2211
- Telluride Medical Center 970-728-3848

Pharmacies

- City Market-Gunnison 970-641-6379
- Walmart-Gunnison 970-641-1153

- City Market-Montrose 970-240-1994
- Walmart-Montrose 970-249-7742

- Sunshine Pharmacy-Telluride 970-728-3601