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Tennis Elbow Surgery

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Answers to common questions about surgery for tennis elbow (lateral epicondylitis) that has not improved with other treatment.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR SURGERY

1 Why am I having surgery?

Most tennis elbow improves without surgery. Surgery is recommended when significant pain continues despite **6–12 months** of good non-surgical treatment.

2 What is done during surgery?

The damaged, degenerated portion of the tendon is removed, and the area is stimulated to heal. If the tendon is torn, it may be repaired back to the bone. Depending on the technique, this is done through a small incision or with a camera (arthroscopy). Surgery is outpatient; most patients go home the same day. You will have anesthesia, and many patients also receive a nerve block to numb the area for 12–24 hours after surgery.

3 How successful is it?

Most patients — roughly **8 to 9 out of 10** — are satisfied with the results. Some have mild lasting discomfort with heavy use. Improvement is gradual over several months.

4 What are the risks?

Uncommon risks include infection, stiffness, continued pain, nerve irritation, and rarely elbow instability.

RECOVERY

5 Will I be in a splint?

You will have a soft dressing or splint for about a week, and a sling for comfort. Move your fingers and wrist right away. Gentle elbow motion usually starts within the first week or two.

6 What can I do with the arm?

Light daily activities such as eating and typing are fine. Avoid lifting more than **1–2 lbs** and forceful gripping for about **6 weeks**. Strengthening starts around 6 weeks with your therapist.

7 When can I drive?

Once you are off narcotics and can grip the wheel comfortably — usually about 1–2 weeks.

8 When can I go back to work?

Desk work: often within about 1 week. **Heavy or manual work:** about 3 months.

9 When will I be fully recovered?

Most patients return to full activity, including sports, around **3–6 months**. Final improvement can take up to a year.

Still have questions? Call our office at **469.800.7200**. After surgery, follow your post-operative instruction sheet — if anything here differs from it, the instruction sheet takes priority.