Hand and Elbow Surgery

The joints of the hand and elbow are complex. Elbow surgery can be complex, and various issues may require a hand specialist in Phoenix to address the problem. Arthritis, fractures, and a host of other problems may require surgery. At Banner CORE Center for Orthopedics, a variety of conditions can be treated, often with arthroscopic, outpatient procedures using the Mako System for robotic-arm assisted surgery.

When Is Hand Surgery Needed?
Consisting of 27 bones, the hand is a complex unit with a network of muscles, tendons, and ligaments. There are many nerves and joints as well. An injury to any one of these can significantly impede hand function.

Arthritis can cause debilitating pain, causing joint pain and tenderness, inflammation, inflamed skin over joints, or restricted movement. Osteoarthritis affects the cartilage linings of the joints, while rheumatoid arthritis is when the immune system causes pain and swelling in the joints, potentially changing their shape and breaking down bone and cartilage.

Other diseases of the hand include blood vessel disorders, but Carpal Tunnel Syndrome is a common ailment that affects the median nerve. Disturbances to the carpal tunnel, on the palm side of the wrist, can affect nerve signals to hand muscles, particularly those near the base of the thumb. Triggered by inflammation, swelling, or fractures of the wrist, the condition is most often characterized by pain, tingling, and numbness in the hand and fingers, and sometimes it requires a hand surgeon in Phoenix, AZ to correct.

How the Top Hand Surgeons Can Help
In Phoenix, hand surgery by our team involves advanced surgical techniques to reduce the challenges of operating on the hand. A hand surgeon in Phoenix may recommend a more conservative approach or minimally invasive arthroscopy to evaluate problems involving tendons, bones, and nerves and effectively treat them.

Procedure Details
How Elbow Arthroscopy Is Performed
An elbow specialist can directly visualize the elbow joint. Arthroscopy may be used to remove loose bone and other objects, release scar tissue, resurface the bone, or repair damage to cartilage. The procedure involves a pencil-sized camera, so only small incisions are required. It’s used to treat arthritis, causes of stiffness, fractures, and providing tennis elbow treatment. In addition to tennis elbow surgery that may be outpatient, other procedures such as elbow reconstruction surgery may require more conventional methods.

The day of surgery, you typically are required to arrive two hours before the procedure. An intravenous line is put in, and you’ll receive medications, antibiotics, and anesthesia. Your anesthesiologist will ask about any reactions to prior anesthetics, and doctors will assess your heart and lungs.
Generally, elbow surgery takes one to two hours, but the operating time depends on the procedure, from nerve treatment to total elbow replacement. Images are taken and reviewed during post-operative follow-ups. In most cases, you’re sent home after one or two hours in a recovery room.

Risks/Benefits

What Elbow Surgery Treats
Three bones come together at the elbow—the humerus of the lower arm and the radius and ulna of the forearm. This hinge joint is prone to issues such as cubital tunnel syndrome, which is a compression of the ulnar nerve. Ulnar nerve irritation can cause pain in the elbow and forearm, numbness in the ring and small fingers, and difficulty gripping objects.

Although there are non-surgical treatments, surgical methods for treating cubital tunnel syndrome include decompression, in which structures over the nerve or opened or released, or transposition, where the nerve is decompressed and moved to a new resting point.

Recovery & Outlook

Care After an Elbow Procedure
The surgical site is bandaged after surgery, and you’ll receive instructions on applying ice to reduce swelling and provide elbow pain treatment. Your elbow doctor may also place your arm in a splint. Sometimes a Continuous Passive Motion machine is used to maintain motion during recovery, and physical therapy will be scheduled based on your condition and procedure. All medications should be taken as prescribed by your doctor.

Why Banner CORE Center for Orthopedics
Our expertise and the availability of advanced techniques such as minimally invasive surgery make us a leading institution for finding top orthopedic hand surgeons. We’re experienced in more complex surgeries, such as elbow joint replacement, as well. To schedule an assessment with our elbow and hand surgeons in Phoenix, AZ, call us today at 1.855.409.7520.