



Post-Operative Instructions for Shoulder Arthroscopy – Rotator Cuff Repair

DIET

- Begin with clear liquids and light foods (Jell-O, soups, etc.)
- Progress to your normal diet if you are not nauseated

MEDICATIONS

Prescribed Narcotics:

- This medication may be taken as needed for pain as directed on the bottle.
- Do not drive or drink alcohol while taking this medication.

Acetaminophen (Tylenol)/OTC Anti-inflammatory medication (Ibuprofen or Aleve)

- This medications may be taken as needed.
- Please use as directed on the bottle.
- Do not exceed 4,000 mg of Acetaminophen in a 24 hour period.

Blood thinner:

- Please take blood thinner as directed. Most patients are prescribed a daily Aspirin for two weeks after surgery. It is important to take as prescribed to help prevent blood clots.

Stool softener:

- We recommend picking up an over the counter stool softer such as MiraLax, as a common side effect of narcotic pain medication is constipation.
- It is normal to take several days to make a bowel movement after surgery.
- Drink plenty of clear liquids as the anesthesia can cause dehydration/constipation as well.

WOUND CARE

- Maintain your operative dressing after surgery. Swelling and minor bleeding are normal after surgery.
- If you notice that there is blood showing through the dressing, please reinforce with additional dressings as needed.
- Remove surgical dressing on the second post-operative day. You may begin to shower the area at this point. Gently wash and rinse the area as tolerated and pat dry. Band-Aids or a clean dressing should be applied and changed daily. The skin sutures will be removed at your first post-operative visit.
- NO immersion in a bath until given approval by our office.

ACTIVITY

- Physical Therapy to begin 2 weeks after surgery.
- You are to wear the sling placed at surgery for around 6 weeks as described by Dr. Rawal. This includes sleeping and throughout the day.
- If there are 24 hours a day, you should be in the sling 23.5 hours of the day. Removal for hygiene, dressing, and home exercise only.
- When sleeping or resting, inclined positions (ie: reclining chair) and a pillow under the forearm for support may provide better comfort **STILL IN SLING**

- Do not engage in activities which increase pain/swelling. Unless otherwise instructed the arm should remain in the sling at all times.
- Avoid long periods of sitting or long distance traveling for 2 weeks.
- NO driving for 2 weeks, as well as while you are taking narcotics, and until you are able to react in an emergency situation.
- May return to sedentary work ONLY or school 3-4 days after surgery, if pain is tolerable.

NERVE BLOCK

- You most likely received a nerve block in your arm that helps with pain control after surgery. This nerve block may still be working for a few days after surgery. The numbness/tingling may wear off slowly, or all at once. Some people experience the numbness wearing off in certain parts of the arm/hand/fingers before it completely resolves.

IMMOBILIZER (if prescribed)

- Your sling should be worn at all times (except for hygiene/exercises).
- Keep your elbow against the pillow and in front of your body at all times to minimize stress on the repair.
- Keep a pillow behind the elbow when lying down to prevent the elbow from sliding backwards.

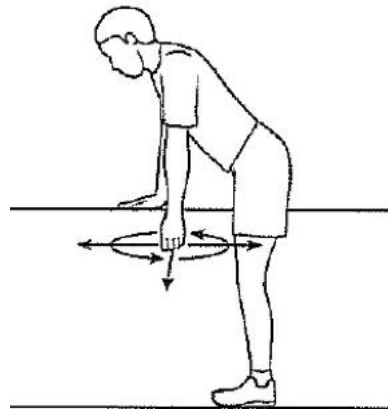
ICE THERAPY

- Icing is very important in the initial post-operative period and should begin immediately after surgery.
- You may use the ice machine for 2 hours on, then remove for two hours during the day until your first post-operative visit. Care should be taken with icing to avoid frostbite to the skin. DO NOT PLACE ICE PACK / PAD DIRECTLY ON SKIN.
- Icing should not be performed while sleeping.

EXERCISE

- Begin exercises (pendulums- see below- and elbow flexion and extension) 24 hours after surgery unless otherwise instructed.
- While maintaining your elbow by the side, begin elbow, hand, and wrist exercises immediately.
- Formal physical therapy (PT) typically begins after you are seen at your first post-operative appointment 2 weeks after surgery. A prescription and protocol will be provided.

Pendulum Exercise:





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EMERGENCIES

Contact our office at (608) 231-3410, if any of the following are present:

- Painful swelling or numbness (note that some swelling and numbness is normal)
- Unrelenting pain
- Fever (over 101° – it is normal to have a low grade fever for the first day or two following surgery) or chills
- Color change in distal arm and/or hand
- Continuous drainage or bleeding from incision (a small amount of drainage is expected)
- Difficulty breathing
- Excessive nausea/vomiting
- Calf pain
- If you have an emergency that requires immediate attention proceed to the nearest emergency room.

FOLLOW-UP CARE/QUESTIONS

- If you do not already have a post-operative appointment scheduled or if you need to change the appointment, please contact our scheduler at 608-231-3410 to schedule.
- Your first post-operative appointment will be scheduled with one of the Physician Assistants, for a wound check, physical therapy protocol and to answer any further questions you have regarding the procedure
- Typically the first post-operative appointment is made for 10-14 days following surgery for suture removal if you have any sutures in place.