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POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

Rotator Cuff Repair Surgery

Activity

- Try and rest the first few days following surgery. Wear your **sling** at all times, including sleeping. You will be directed by Dr. Day as to when you may discontinue your sling. Generally most patients will end up staying in the sling for the first 6 weeks following surgery.
- With the sling, you may be more comfortable sleeping in a seated position (i.e. recliner) with a pillow under your forearm for support.
- **Ice** or the **cryo-cuff** can be used as much as possible for the first 3-4 weeks to help decrease swelling.

You may remove your arm from the sling 4-5 times a day and begin the enclosed home exercises (specific instructions included in this handout)

- Elbow & wrist range of motion** exercises: Gently bend and extend your elbow to help prevent stiffness.

Do not lift any objects greater than 1-2 pounds for the first 4-6 weeks

Driving is not recommended for the 1st 2 weeks following surgery and contraindicated when taking narcotic pain medication.

Return to (sedentary) work or school the day after surgery if pain is tolerable. Return to heavy labor will be determined by Dr. Day.

Dressings

Remove the outer dressing 48 hours after surgery. Clean the surrounding skin with sterile water or rubbing alcohol and cover the sutures loosely with band-aids or a clean dressing. Be sure not to vigorously rub over any of the incision sites as they are still healing.

Small amounts of bloody drainage, numbness at incision site, swelling, and bruising are normal findings following surgery.

Do not use any ointments under band-aids.

Showering/Bathing:

- You may shower after 48 hours after returning home. You can allow the shower water to run down the incision. There is no need to cover the wound while in the shower.
- You should not scrub the incision. Be sure to pat the incision dry with a towel after showering.
- If wound drainage is noted, you should **sponge bathe instead of showering** until the drainage resolves.
- No submersion in water, including a bath, Jacuzzi, or swimming pool for six weeks and until given clearance by Dr. Day.

You may remove the sling to shower, but be careful to avoid any sudden movements or heavy lifting

Medication

You have been prescribed one of the following **pain medications**:

Oxycodone– Please take 1-2 tabs every 4-6 hours as needed for severe pain.

Post-operative pain tends to be the most pronounced the first 2-3 days following surgery.

Please take Tylenol, 1000mg every 6 hours for the first 3 days as this has significantly less side-effects compared to narcotic pain medication. **Do not exceed 4,000 mg acetaminophen in 24 hours from all sources.**

You have also been given a prescription for Gabapentin (Neurontin) to take one tablet at bedtime as needed for pain.

You may also have been given a prescription for Zofran, an anti-nausea medication. Please take this medication as needed for nausea

If you have any side effects (i.e. Nausea, rash, trouble breathing) from medication discontinue its use and call our office.

Excessive use of pain medication can lead to an increased incidence of side effects and long-term dependency issues. Please take the pain medication as directed and understand that the medications are meant to minimize pain in the initial post-operative phase but may not relieve pain completely.

Physical Therapy

The need for a timing of outpatient physical therapy will be determined by Dr. Day and discussed at your first post-operative visit.

Please perform your prescribed home exercises to help facilitate early shoulder range of motion and to prevent stiffness in your elbow and wrist.

Follow Up

You have likely already been scheduled for your first post-operative visit. If you have not received an appointment, please contact the office to schedule an appointment to be seen 10-14 days after your surgery.

You will be seen by Dr. Day or his Physician Assistant for your first post-operative visit to review your intra-operative findings and to go over any questions you may have.

Sutures will also be removed at that time.

Call the office immediately if you develop a fever (>101.5), chills, chest pain, shortness of breath, excessive incisional drainage, or persistent upper extremity numbness.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call the office.

Home Exercises

Elbow Curls:

Come out of your sling. Without any extra weight, use your good hand to help bring your other hand towards your shoulder by bending your elbow. Then slowly lower your arm back to a straight position. Then repeat.

Wrist Curls:

While in and out of your sling, make a light fist and move your operative wrist in an up and down movement slowly like you are knocking on a door.

Ball Squeezes:

While in and out of your sling, squeeze the foam ball to exercise the hand, fingers, and wrist muscles. This exercise can be very effective to help promote good circulation and prevent excessive swelling.

*** All exercises to be done for 5-10 minutes, 4-5 times a day ***