

POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS SHOULDER ARTHROSCOPY

Dr. Steven E. Flores

MEDICATION

- One of three pain medications, Norco (hydrocodone), Ultram, or Tylenol #3 will be prescribed to you. Take as instructed and as needed.
 - Pain medication may cause constipation. You may take an over the counter stool softener (Colace, Senekot, etc) to help prevent this problem.
 - You should take these medicines with food or they may nauseate you.
 - You may not drive or operate heavy equipment while on narcotics
- If you have a nerve block, begin taking the pills as you feel your sensation returning to prevent a sudden onset of extreme pain (typically 10-12 hours after your surgery). **DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE BLOCK COMPLETELY WEARS OFF.**
 - Most patients find it helpful to take two pills 10-12 hours after surgery and another two, four hours later to help transition to oral pain medications.
 - The first 48 hours are typically the worst for pain and gradually improves.
- DO NOT take any medication with Advil or ibuprofen for **two weeks** after surgery as this may impair tissue healing.
- A sleeping pill may also be given, take as needed.
- **Resume all home medications unless otherwise instructed.**
- Call immediately to the office (713-486-7550) if you are having an adverse reaction to the medicine.

WOUND CARE

- You may remove surgical dressings on the second day after surgery unless otherwise instructed (surgery Wednesday, remove Friday; Friday surgery, remove Sunday). Do not remove steri-strips (tape pieces). If steri-strips fall off, cover incisions with band-aids.
 - If you have a surgery for your biceps tendon, you may have a clear bandage with gauze on the inside of your arm which you should try and keep on.
- The incisions may not get wet until after your first post-operative visit. Place a large garbage bag over your shoulder to shower or take a sponge bath while your dressings are on.
- You may remove the sling to shower but let your arm dangle to the side. Do not use your muscles to move the shoulder unless instructed otherwise.
- After your dressings have been removed, you may continue to use the bag to shower, cover with plastic wrap or use waterproof bandages.
 - To access your armpit, lean forward slightly to let your arm dangle away from your side.
- Most patients will be able to get their incisions wet after their first post-op visit.

- NO submersion of wounds (bath, hot tub, pool) is allowed until a minimum of 2-3 weeks after surgery.

ACTIVITY

- Do not attempt to use your own muscles to move your elbow away from your side until instructed.
- The involved arm may be taken out of the sling three times a day to bend and straighten your elbow unless otherwise instructed.
- You may move the hand and wrist as tolerated (minimum 3 times a day).
- Formal Physical Therapy will begin after your first postoperative visit for most procedures.

SLING

- Remain in sling (with abduction pillow) at all times, except when dressing, showering or exercising the arm unless otherwise instructed.
- It is not recommended that you drive in your sling.

SLEEP

- Nighttime will probably be the most uncomfortable time. You may use the sleeping aid as prescribed to assist you in resting well.
- Sleeping in a reclined chair or propped up on a pile of pillows may aid in sleeping. Placing a pillow behind the elbow to prevent it from sagging may also be of benefit.
- Sleep in your sling until instructed otherwise.

COLD THERAPY

- Ice or cryo-cuff (if covered by insurance) should be used for comfort and swelling. Use it at least 20 minutes at a time. Many patients use it an hour on then an hour off while awake for the first day or two.
- **Never apply directly to exposed skin. Place a dish-towel or t-shirt between your skin and the ice or cryo-cuff.**
- After the two days, use 20-30 minutes every 3-4 hours if possible.

EMERGENCIES

- If you have an emergency contact Dr. Flores's office at 713-486-7550 and he will be contacted.
- Contact the office if you notice any of the following:
 - Uncontrolled nausea or vomiting, reaction to medication, inability to urinate, fever greater than 101.5 (low grade fever 1-2 days after surgery is normal), severe pain not relieved by pain medication, redness or continued drainage around incisions (a small amount is normal).
- **If you are having chest pain or difficulty breathing, call 911 or go to the closest emergency room.**

FOLLOW UP APPOINTMENT

- Please make your first post-op visit 5-7 after surgery if not done so already.
- **If you have any questions, please call Claudia at 713-486-7550.**