

POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

SHOULDER ARTHROSCOPY

ROTATOR CUFF REPAIR

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1. After arthroscopy the wound is covered with gauze and tape. These should generally be left in place for 48 hours. Due to the large amount of fluid used during arthroscopy, it is normal to see some bloody drainage on the dressings. The dressing should be removed and wounds covered with Band-Aids on the second day after surgery.

Do not remove the paper strips over the incision or cut any visible suture. Wounds should be kept dry for 48 hours. Unless otherwise instructed, after post-op day 3, the wound may be exposed in the shower without scrubbing the area. The wound should not be submerged in a bathtub or pool until notified.

2. Patients are generally more comfortable sleeping in a reclining chair or with pillows propped up behind the shoulder. Some difficulty with sleeping is common for 3-4 weeks after surgery.

3. Icing is very important for the first 7-14 days after surgery. While the post-op dressing is in place, icing/cooling machine should be performed as frequently as possible. Once the dressing is removed (after 48-72 hours), ice is applied for 20-minute periods 3-4 times per day or as much as tolerated. Care must be taken with icing to avoid frostbite to the skin.

4. On the first or second post-op day, begin doing the wrist, elbow and arm pendulum exercises as instructed. Some swelling and bruising in your shoulder and arm is expected. While some mild exercise is important, and can decrease some swelling, don't over-do it. Common sense is the rule. Do NOT lift your operative arm away from your body; this could compromise the rotator cuff repair.

5. The anesthetic drugs used during your surgery may cause nausea for the first 24-48 hours. If nausea is encountered, drink only clear liquids (i.e. Sprite or 7-up). If nausea and vomiting become severe, or the patient shows signs of dehydration (lack of urination) please call the doctor or the surgical center. A low-grade fever (100.5) is not uncommon in the first 24 hours but unusual beyond.

Please call the doctor with any temperature over 101.0 degrees. You may take a baby aspirin (81 mg) a day until your sutures are removed in the office. This may lower the risk of a blood clot developing after surgery. Should severe calf pain occur or significant swelling of calf and ankle, please call the doctor...this could be signs of a blood clot.

6. It is not uncommon for patients to encounter more pain on the first or second day after

surgery. This is the time when swelling peaks and when the regional anesthetic “block” wears off. Using the pain medication as directed will help control pain with little risk of complication. Taking pain medication before bedtime will assist in sleeping. It is important not to drink alcohol or drive while taking narcotic medication. You can supplement narcotic medication (i.e. vicodin, percocet) with 200 mg or 400 mg of ibuprofen every 4-6 hours. You should resume your normal medications for other conditions the day after surgery. We have no specific diet restrictions after surgery but extensive use of narcotics can lead to constipation. High fiber diet, lots of fluids, and muscle activity can prevent this occurrence. If necessary, over-the-counter stool softeners should be purchased and used as directed.

7. Following shoulder surgery, use the sling during the day and at night (while sleeping) unless instructed otherwise. You may remove the sling several times a day for the gentle exercises that were explained (hand, wrist, elbow and pendulum shoulder).

8. Dr. Hergan will need to reexamine you 10-14 days after shoulder surgery. Please call the office to schedule a follow-up appointment. 860-685-8940

9. If unexpected problems occur and you need to speak to Dr. Hergan or his Physician Assistant, please call the office.

10. Good Luck and Speedy Recovery!