

# Post-op Instructions for Rotator Cuff Repair

For Patients of Troy L. Berg, M.D.

**These instructions are to compliment the information given by the nursing staff and physical therapists. They cover many of the common questions.**

## Wound Care

- Dressings are to be kept clean and dry. You may change the dressing daily if desired. After removing the old dressing replace with 4x4 gauze pads and secure with tape. A small amount of clear drainage or bleeding is normal. If this is happening, the dressing should be changed daily.
- You may get the incision wet when showering 2-3 days after surgery. The shower should be brief and the wound patted dry with a clean towel. No baths or soaking the incision until 2 weeks after surgery and scabs are absent.
- If purulent drainage (thick white or greenish in color) is coming from the wound, or the wound has increasing redness, or if you are having a temperature of 101, please report these symptoms to your surgeon or the doctor on call.

## Pain

- Ice your shoulder as frequently as possible. We recommend 4-5 times per day for 20 minutes per time. You may use either the ice bag given to you at the hospital or simply place ice in a zip lock bag and place on the shoulder.
- Narcotic pain medication will be prescribed for use after you leave the hospital. Try to wean down as tolerated. These medications can cause constipation and you may want to use an over the counter stool softener. Tylenol products may be used as an alternative to the prescribed pain medication. The prescribed narcotic medications should not be taken at the same time as plain Tylenol. Anti-inflammatory medications such as ibuprofen and Aleve have been shown to decrease healing if used on a regular basis. Please use these sparingly, if needed, for break through pain. If a refill of medication is needed, please call the office during regular business hours, Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. In general, refills will not be made after hours, so please plan ahead.

## Driving

- To drive you must no longer be taking narcotic pain pills. (plain Tylenol is allowed) Also, you must feel strong and alert. You may take your arm out of the sling to hold the bottom of the steering wheel, but should not actively raise your arm until cleared by physical therapy. Most people start driving approximately two weeks after surgery.

## Activity

- You will be in a sling for 4-6 weeks after surgery. Initially, you should wear the sling at all times and only remove it for exercises and showering. Feel free to adjust the sling as needed to make it more comfortable. The pillow underneath the sling can be removed in 3 weeks if bothersome. Your Physical Therapist will progress your therapy and wean you out of the sling when appropriate.
- Upon discharge from the hospital you are encouraged to perform hand, wrist and elbow range of motion exercises 4-5 times per day. These exercises will help to decrease swelling. Pendulum exercises are also encouraged. Initially you should not attempt to elevate the surgical arm under its own muscle power. Your Physical therapist will progress your activity appropriately.

## Follow-up

Make sure an appointment has been scheduled for you at Dr. Berg's clinic for approximately 1-2 weeks after surgery.

**Troy Berg, M.D.**

**Chippewa Valley Orthopedics & Sports Medicine**

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