

POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

Rotator Cuff Repair

Arthroscopic Rotator Cuff Repair

Questions or a problem after surgery? Call Dr. Wichman's office at **414-479-7000**.

Diet

1. Begin with clear liquids and light foods (jello, soup, toast, etc...)
2. Progress slowly back to your pre-op diet as tolerated
3. Try to avoid taking narcotics on an empty stomach to avoid nausea

Wound Care

1. Take good care of your operative dressing. You may loosen bandage if elbow, wrist or hand swelling occurs
2. It is normal for the shoulder to bleed slightly and swell after surgery
3. If blood soaks through bandage, do not panic. Reinforce with additional dressings as needed.
4. Remove your surgical dressing on second post-operative day
5. If steri-strips are present, they should remain in place until first post-operative visit
6. If minimal drainage is present, cover incision with band-aids and change daily.
7. To avoid infections, keep surgical incisions clean and dry. – Please cover incisions with waterproof bandages for showering. NO immersion of arm in water (ie: bath)

Medications

1. Pain medication is injected into the wound and shoulder joint during surgery. This will wear off in approximately 8-12 hours from surgery.
2. Most patients will require a short period of narcotic pain medication. This should be taken as directed on the bottle
3. Norco (hydrocodone/tylenol) or Percocet (oxycodone/Tylenol)
4. Take 1-2 tablets every 4-6 hours as needed for pain.
5. Maximum of 12 pills per 24 hour period
6. Do NOT take additional Tylenol (acetaminophen) while taking these medications. Many products contain this medication (cough meds, cold meds) and can lead to liver damage.
7. Common side effects of narcotic pain medications are nausea, drowsiness, and constipation. Use a stool softener (Colace, senokot) or laxative (Miralax) as needed
8. If you are having problems with nausea and vomiting, call the office to see if the medication should be changed or additional medications prescribed.
9. Journavx (suzetrigine): If you were prescribed Journavx, take 2 tablets (your one-time starting dose) with a small sip of water before leaving home the morning of surgery. Then take 1 tablet every 12 hours, starting 12 hours after your first dose, as directed. Take the starting dose on an empty stomach, and avoid grapefruit while taking this medication.
10. Do not drive a car or operate heavy machinery while taking narcotics.

Activity

1. When sleeping or resting, inclined positions (chair or sofa) with a pillow under the forearm may provide better comfort.
2. Avoid activities that increase pain/swelling until first post-operative visit. Also avoid any active use of the operative arm.
3. Avoid long periods of sitting without arm supported or any long distance travelling for the first two weeks after surgery.
4. No driving until instructed by medical team
5. You may return to sedentary work ONLY or school 3-4 days after surgery, if pain is tolerable.

Sling

1. You will be discharged from surgery wearing a sling. This should be worn at ALL TIMES except for hygiene and post-operative exercises.

Ice Therapy

1. Begin immediately after surgery
2. Use ice machine or ice packs every 2 hours for 20 minutes until your first post-operative visit.
3. If an ice machine was prescribed, may use continuously until first post-operative visit. Remember to protect the skin to avoid thermal injury (frostbite)

Exercise

1. NO exercise or shoulder motion until after your first post-operative visit unless instructed otherwise.
2. You SHOULD begin elbow, wrist and hand range of motion on the first post-operative day, about 2-3 times daily.
3. Formal physical therapy (PT) will be discussed at your first post-operative visit with a PA, typically 7-14 days after surgery.

When to Call Us

Contact Dr. Wichman at 414-479-7000 if any of the following are present:

- Painful swelling or numbness
- Unrelenting pain
- Redness around incisions
- Fever (above 101.5°F) - It is not uncommon to have a low-grade fever for the first day or two following surgery.
- Color changes in fingers, hand, or arm
- Continuous drainage or bleeding from incisions (a small amount of drainage is expected.)
- Difficulty breathing
- Excessive nausea or vomiting

If you have an emergency after hours or over the weekend, call 414-479-7000 to be connected to the "on-call" physician or physician assistant. Do NOT call the hospital or surgery center.

If you have an emergency that requires immediate attention, call 911 or proceed to the nearest Emergency Room.