

Post Operative Instructions
Arthroscopic Rotator Cuff Repair
Jason Browdy, M.D.

You have just had an arthroscopic rotator cuff repair. Following these guidelines should give you the best chance for a quick recovery.

- Diet:** Advance to solid food as tolerated.
- Bandages:** Unless told otherwise, you may remove your dressings 48 hours after surgery and place Band-Aids or gauze over the incisions. Change the Band-Aids or gauze daily until there is no drainage. Do not clean your incisions with peroxide, alcohol or ointments.
- Bathing/Shower:** You may get your incisions wet five days after surgery in the shower, but do not submerge the incisions under water (in a pool or bathtub) until you are told it is safe to do so. If you desire to shower sooner than five days after surgery, please buy water proof Band-Aids, and use them to cover the incisions.
- Activity:** If you had a rotator cuff repair, you will likely leave the surgery center or hospital with a sling and a small pillow that keeps the arm slightly off your side. The purpose of this pillow is to reduce tension on your repaired rotator cuff. Please stay in your sling and keep the pillow on your side until you are seen in the office. You may remove both the sling and pillow during bathing and on occasion to move your elbow and wrist. You may move your hand and wrist as tolerated. Please remember that active motion of the operated shoulder soon after surgery can jeopardize the repair. **So, please do not actively move your shoulder.**
- Medications:** Many patients elect to have a "block" prior to surgery to help with post-operative pain relief. This block provides significant pain relief in the early post-operative period, but it will wear off 8-12 hours after surgery. You will be prescribed a narcotic pain medicine to help with control the pain you might experience after the block wears off. It is very important to "stay ahead" of the pain by taking the medication prior to the onset of severe pain. Once you start to regain sensation in the fingers or arm, it is advisable to take your pain medicine - do not wait until you hurt to take your pain medicine. Pain medicine can cause nausea, so take the medication with food. You may be given a

Medications (cont.): prescription to deal with nausea. You do not need to fill this prescription, but you should keep it handy in the event you need it.

You may be given two different pain medications. The purpose of this is to give you more than one option. If one medicine causes unpleasant side effects, you may try the other medicine.

Comfort Measures: In addition to pain medication, you can use ice. Ice is an excellent way to diminish pain and swelling after surgery. You can apply it to the shoulder for 15-20 minutes at a time. A cooling system may have been applied. The cooling system is a very effective way to cool the shoulder and keep it comfortable.

Problems: When sleeping or resting, you may find it more comfortable to use a reclining chair and a pillow under the forearm for support rather than lying in a bed.

Your shoulder may have swelling and soreness for the first several days. This is to be expected. You may also notice some bruising around the shoulder and chest wall.

It is not uncommon for the hand to experience slight swelling and/or numbness or tingling in the hand. This can be in part due to constriction of the wrist by your sling, and removing the sling periodically can help.

Please contact Dr. Browdy's office if you have any of the following:

1. Severe Pain
2. A Temperature above 101 Degrees
3. Pain, redness or significant swelling in your knee or calf

Please call us if you have any questions.

Appointments: You will need to see Dr. Browdy for a follow-up appointment 7-10 days after surgery. Please call the office to make this appointment. At this first appointment, your sutures will be removed and physical therapy will likely be prescribed.

Phone Numbers: Advanced Orthopedics and Sports Medicine: 314-721-7325

Medication Refill Policy: It is the policy of Advanced Orthopedics that narcotic medications will only be refilled during office hours. Please be patient with the office staff. If you call during patient hours, your call may be returned at the end of the day.