



Orthopaedic Associates of Zanesville
Post-Operative Instructions Arthroscopic Rotator Cuff Repair
Dr. Brautigan

Please note that these instructions are general guidelines to be followed; however, any written or verbal instructions provided by your provider supersede the instructions below and should be followed.

WOUND CARE

- It is normal for the shoulder to bleed and swell following surgery. If blood soaks through the bandage, do not become alarmed, reinforce with additional dressing
- To avoid infection, keep surgical incisions clean and dry – you may shower by placing a plastic covering over the surgical site beginning the day after surgery until the 3rd post op day
- Remove surgical dressing on the third post-operative day – if minimal drainage is present, apply band aids or a clean dressing over incisions and change daily. You can now get it wet in the shower.
- NO immersion in a bath until given approval by our office.

MEDICATIONS

- Local anesthetics are injected into the wound and shoulder joint at the time of surgery. This will wear off within 8-12 hours and it is not uncommon for patients to encounter more pain on the first or second day after surgery when swelling peaks.
- You will typically be prescribed one narcotic script following surgery to be used after at home for pain. Please take these how they are prescribed on the actual prescription:
 - Percocet (oxycodone / acetaminophen): A strong narcotic pain reliever. Do not exceed 10 tablets in a 24 hours period.

You can also use a combination of:

- Over the counter Tylenol 500-1000mg every 6 hours as needed for pain and may alternating with ibuprofen 600-800mg every 6 hours as needed for pain.
- Keep in mind that all narcotics will cause drowsiness and should not be used with alcohol or if driving. Taking this medication on an empty stomach can result in an upset stomach. It is common to feel the most discomfort when lying down to sleep at night, so you may find it beneficial to take the medication at bedtime. **If unusual side effects occur, please discontinue the medication and contact our office.**
- Do not drive a car or operate machinery while taking the narcotic medication or while in sling

ACTIVITY

- You are to wear the sling placed at surgery until instructed by your surgeon, including sleeping and during the day.
- If there are 24 hours a day, you should be in the sling 23.5 hours of the day. Removal for hygiene, dressing, and home exercise only
- When sleeping or resting, inclined positions (i.e.: reclining chair) and a pillow under the forearm for support may provide better comfort **STILL IN SLING**
- Do not engage in activities which increase pain/swelling. Unless otherwise instructed the arm should remain in the sling at all times.
- Avoid long periods of sitting or long-distance traveling for 2 weeks.
- NO driving until instructed otherwise by physician, it is illegal to drive in a sling

ICE THERAPY

- Icing is very important in the initial post-operative period and should begin immediately after surgery.
- Use icing machine continuously or ice packs (if machine not prescribed) for 45 minutes every 2 hours daily until your first post-operative visit. Care should be taken with icing to avoid frostbite to the skin.

EXERCISE

- Begin exercises (pendulums and active flexion/extension at the elbow without resistance) 24 hours after surgery unless otherwise instructed.
- While maintaining your elbow by the side, begin elbow, hand, and wrist exercises immediately.
- If formal physical therapy (PT) is needed, it is typically arranged prior to your surgery date. It generally begins several days after your surgery date unless your provider has stated otherwise. If you are unsure of this please call the office at 740-454-3273 to receive instructions for starting therapy.

EMERGENCIES

- With any surgery it is important to be aware of any signs of infection, which can include: unusual looking or smelling drainage (green/yellow), increased redness and tenderness around the incision site, or fever (i.e. 101 degrees or above) and chills. Also, be aware of excessive bleeding or continued numbness and tingling. If you experience any of these symptoms, please call our office. There is a doctor on call 24 hours a day.

FOLLOW-UP CARE/QUESTIONS

- If you do not already have a post-operative appointment scheduled, please contact our office at 740-454-3273 to schedule.
- Typically, the first post-operative appointment following surgery is 10-14 days following surgery. If you have any further questions please contact us during office hours.