

# Post Operative Instructions for Rotator Cuff Repair

## Oregon Medical Group Orthopedic and Sports Medicine Clinic

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### Call our office if you have any of the following:

- Fever over 101 degrees.
- Yellow, green or foul smelling drainage, or excessive bloody drainage.
- Severe pain in your shoulder. Significant calf tenderness, swelling or pain.
- A large red area around the incisions.
- You suspect an allergic reaction to medications or dressing materials. This could be shortness of breath, a rash or redness, hives, etc.

### Dressings/Bandages:

- Keep the post-op dressing clean and intact. The dressing is relatively waterproof and you may begin showering the day after the surgery. For the showers, remove the shoulder immobilizer and let the arm hang down by your side. Avoid excessive water on the dressing. Pat your dressing dry after the shower. Do not soak the area in a bath or swimming pool until the wounds have completely healed.
- If you have a little bleeding on the dressing, reinforce it with a clean towel, gauze or bandage materials. **If you have increased bleeding that soaks the dressing, call our office immediately.**

### Medication:

- Take your regular medications as prescribed. Prescription medications after surgery:
  - Pain medication (usually oxycodone): Please take according to the instructions on an “as needed” basis. If your pain becomes too severe, don’t try to “tough it out”. Call our office if you have severe pain that doesn’t respond to pain medication. Your pain will gradually lessen after surgery and you will need less pain medication. Remember, pain medication is addictive, so try to wean yourself off them as your shoulder heals.
  - Additionally, take Tylenol Extra Strength 2 tablets every six hours, independent of pain level. Take Tylenol for 5-7 days. Do not take Tylenol if your narcotic medication is anything other than Oxycodone.
  - Some patients are given Toradol (pain medication). Take with food or milk to avoid stomach upset or bleeding. Toradol needs to be taken around the clock for three days but narcotic pain medication needs to be taken on as needed basis. If not taking Toradol, you may supplement with Advil, 600 mg, 2-3 pills every 6-8 hours as needed. Do not take Toradol or Advil if you have stomach ulcers, gastritis or heartburn. Stop Toradol and Advil if you develop significant abdominal discomfort.
  - Phenergan (anti-nausea). Phenergan can help if the pain medication gives you nausea. We will give you a prescription to fill if needed.
- Side effects of pain medication:
  - Nausea. You have been given a prescription for Phenergan that you can fill if needed. If nausea severe and doesn’t go away, call our office.

- Constipation. Drink plenty of water and/or fruit juice. Take milk of magnesia or Colace if you become constipated, or use a stool softener such as Dulcolax.
- Itching. These symptoms are often relieved with diphenhydramine (e.g. Benadryl). Call our office if itching becomes a problem.
- **Some pain medications contain Tylenol. DO NOT take additional Tylenol without discussing with your surgeon. This can lead to liver failure.**
- **Do not drive or drink alcohol while you are on narcotic pain medication.**

**Activity:**

- Minimize activity for 48 hours after surgery.
- If you have been fitted for a cryo-cuff use as instructed. In general, cold packs should be applied to your shoulder every hour for 20 minutes, for the first 72 hours. After that, apply ice 2-3 times/day until the swelling goes down. Put a thin towel between the ice bag and your skin. **Do NOT use heat.**
- Begin your shoulder exercises (as shown during the pre-operative visit) as soon as you return home from the hospital. Remove the operated arm from the shoulder immobilizer. Have someone help you, and do the exercises at least 3 times a day. You may do the exercises either laying down or sitting up. Don't forget to stretch the elbow, wrist and hand.
- Be very careful when dressing and undressing and make sure NOT to use the muscles of the operated shoulder. It is best if someone can assist you. Use gravity to help bring the arm away from your body. Do not wear T-shirts. Instead, wear tops that button from the front. Your arm needs to be in a shoulder immobilizer at all times except for showers and exercises.
- Keep your armpit area clean and dry to avoid rash. Use baby powder as needed. Contact our office if you develop a rash.
- Sleeping may be difficult for a few weeks after surgery. Avoid sleeping on the operative side. You may be more comfortable sleeping in a reclining chair, or propped up with pillows in bed. At night, place a pillow behind your operative arm to keep the arm in front of your body.
- Don't drive until we have seen you for your post-op appointment, as it might be difficult to control the vehicle.
- DO NOT resume sports, use exercise equipment, or do physical activities including lifting, until your doctor tells you its okay.
- You will begin physical therapy shortly after surgery. If you don't already have a consultation scheduled, call our office.

**Diet:**

- Resume your regular diet. Drink plenty of fluids, but stay away from alcoholic and caffeinated fluids. Try to stay away from smoking.

**Your Post-op Appointment:**

- Should be scheduled for 7-10 days after surgery. Call 541-242-4812 if you don't have a post-op appointment date and time. If you have sutures, they will be removed at this visit.

**Special Instructions:**

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