



Quick Reference Post-Operative Instructions for Rotator Cuff Repairs

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SLING

- You should be fitted for a sling prior to surgery. Call us if you do not have this appointment set up. Bring it with you on the day of surgery.
- You should plan to wear the sling at all times. Only removing it for showering and exercises. When you take it off to shower let your arm hang down, do not use it to lift or wash. Exercises will consist of pendulums, or exercises prescribed by your physical therapist.
- You will be in your ultra-sling for 4-6 weeks. We will let you know the day of surgery how long depending on the type of repair that was required.
- You cannot drive while you are in a sling.
- When you are 4-6 weeks out from your surgery date you can start to wean out of sling as tolerated based on your therapist's recommendation.

PAIN

- The day of surgery you will be receiving a scalene nerve block, this block can last 12-18 hours after surgery (your arm may feel numb for this time).
- Although you may not have much pain while the block is still working, we recommend taking your prescribed pain medication before the block wears off. Plan to take the pain medication regularly the first 3-5 days to stay ahead of the pain.
- You will have received medicine that will make you sleepy. This will affect your ability to think clearly and make good decisions. You will need a responsible adult to drive you home and stay with you for at least 24 hours after surgery. Do not drive, use machinery, or make important decisions while on pain medications. Do not drink alcohol while on pain medications.
- Unless you have medical reasons that do not permit NSAID (Motrin, Advil) use, you may use these medications in addition to the prescribed medications for pain.
- If you are having trouble sleeping try taking over the counter Benadryl before bed.
- Consider taking an over the counter stool softener while on narcotic medication. As well as eat plenty of fiber and drink plenty of water.

WOUND CARE

- Do not shower or bathe for the first 48 hours after surgery.
- Please leave your dressing/bandages on for the first 48 hours.
- After 48 hours it is ok to remove the dressings. You will have 3-5 stitches in portal sites about your shoulder.
- It is ok to take your arm out of your sling and allow it hang at your side for your shower.
- Only let the water run over the shoulder (do not scrub or wash directly over your incision sites).
- Do not submerge the shoulder in any type of water (bath, hot tub, pool, etc.) for at least 2 weeks.
- After your shower if any of your portal sites are draining, cover with fresh dressings daily until no longer draining. This should not last more than a couple days. If wound sites are dry you can leave them open to air or cover with a dry band-aid if the stitch is bothersome.
- Do not apply any lotions or ointments to the wound sites until permission from the doctor. This will be at least until your first post-operative visit.
- Your stitches will be removed at your 2-week post op visit.
- If you need to schedule a 2-week post op visit please **call Darcy at 651-351-2671**.

PHYSICAL THERAPY

- We will give you a prescription to start this when you come in for your 2-week visit.
- Feel free to call the physical therapy office to make appointments right after your 2-week after surgery visit.
- Physical Therapy scheduling for Stillwater and Woodbury – call 651-351-2602.
- The first 4-6 weeks after surgery therapy will be focused on motion. We are trying to not let your shoulder get still while still allowing the repairs to heal.
- After 4-6 weeks you will start strengthening. This will be a slow process. Do not think you will make yourself heal faster by lifting more weight at the beginning. Slow and steady will win in the end.

WHEN SHOULD YOU BE CONCERNED?

- If you have a temperature above 101.6. It is normal to have a mild temperature a day or two after surgery. Make sure you are taking deep breaths to fill your lungs all the way.
- Signs of infection include: increasing pain, increasing swelling, redness, unpleasant odor, increased warmth, or green or yellow drainage.
- If you have severe symptoms, such as:
 - Chest pain
 - Difficulty breathing
 - Weakness or inability to move the arms and legs as usual
 - Severe headache
 - New confusion
 - Loss of bowel or bladder function

CALL 911 or go to an emergency department at a nearby hospital

- If you feel it is not urgent **contact our office at 651-351-2671**. You will likely have to leave a message and your call will be returned. We try to return all calls quickly, but it may be a few hours or the next day.