



## POST OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

### **Rotator Cuff Repair**

#### **Diet**

- Following surgery, nausea is very common. Begin with clear liquids and progress to your daily diet as tolerated.

#### **Wound Management**

- A bandage is applied to the operative site. Keep this on for 48 hours after the surgery.
- It is normal for there to be drainage and for the dressing to become blood tinged
- Remove the dressing after the second post-operative day. It is still normal for there to be some drainage. Apply steri-strips or band-aids to the incision sites.
- No showers until after the dressing is removed. No bathes or hot tubs!
- Sometimes small incisions are made that do not require suture closure. Please do not be alarmed by this.

#### **Activity**

- Keep operative arm in the sling provided at all times, with the exception of showering.
- Sling will likely be worn for 4- 6 weeks.
- You are encouraged to walk in a controlled environment in order to avoid prolonged sitting.
- You may take you arm out of the sling while sitting to allow the bending and straightening of your elbow, wrist and hand.
- If a biceps tenodesis is performed do not perform elbow flexion exercises.
- Pendulum exercises may be performed the day after the surgery.
- No driving until instructed by your physician

- Sleeping may be performed in a reclining chair or bed with the use of pillows to support the operative site as tolerated.
- A ball is provided with your sling. Squeeze the ball to reduce swelling in the hand.
- Generally, if you have a desk job you may return to work on the third post operative day, with no use of the operative arm.
- Return to a physically demanding job will be discussed on your postoperative visit

#### **Ice**

- An ice machine will be provided and applied at the conclusion of your surgery.
- Use continuously for the first 72 hours postoperatively, then in 30 minute increments 4-5 times per day thereafter as tolerated.

#### **Medications**

- Most patients require the use of narcotics for a period of time after surgery. Take as directed.
- If you received an interscalene block, numbness and loss of function may persist for up to 24 hours postoperatively. You are encouraged to take your prescribed pain medication as indicated on the bottle regardless of pain for the first 24 hours.
- Common side effects of pain medication: nausea, insomnia, itching, constipation, drowsiness, hallucinations.
- Take medications with food to reduce side effects
- Do not operate machinery or moving vehicles while taking the pain medication.
- Ibuprofen, Motrin, Advil or Aleve may be taken as directed in addition to the pain medication to control symptoms.

## Emergencies

- **If at any time you have questions or emergent concerns contact Dr. Van Thiel or his physician assistant Carly Jackson, PA-C at (815-398-9491).**
- If you are calling after hours or over a weekend you will be directed to the physician answering service and you may be called by the physician or physician assistant on call.
- Please call if any of the following arise:
- Fever >101. (It is normal to have a low grade fever for the first 1-2 days after surgery)
- Redness
- Painful swelling
- Numbness
- Shortness of breath
- Excessive bleeding and/or drainage from incision sites
- If you require immediate attention, go to the nearest emergency room

## Follow-up

- A follow-up appointment will be set for 7-10 days after the surgery. If you have questions or concerns about this date contact our scheduler at (815-381-7365) during normal office hours.
- Physical Therapy will begin after your first postoperative visit
- If you have additional questions or concerns most questions can be addressed by our Nursing staff (Jamie and Brittani) by calling (815-381-7365).

**Geoffrey Van Thiel, MD**  
**815-398-9491**  
**gvanthiel@rockfordortho.com**

**Surgery Scheduler: 815-381-7365**  
**Physician Assistant: Carly Jackson, PA-C**  
**carly.jackson@rockfordortho.com**