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## **INSTRUCTIONS ON CARING FOR YOURSELF AT HOME**

### **Post Op Instructions Following Arthroscopic Shoulder Surgery (Subacromial Decompression, AC Joint Resection, Biceps Tenodesis/Tenotomy, Labral Repair, and Rotator Cuff Repair)**

#### **Medications:**

- Long acting local anesthetics or an interscalene block are routinely used to minimize post operative pain. This will wear off within 8 to 24 hours.
- Most patients will need some narcotic pain medication such as Percocet (Oxycodone) or Vicodin (Hydrocodone). Take as directed on the bottle.
- Common side effects of pain medicine are nausea, drowsiness, and constipation. To minimize these side effects, take the smallest dose needed to control the pain. Take medications with food. If constipation occurs, take an over the counter laxative or stool softener.
- If you have severe nausea, or your pain is not controlled please call the office to have your medication changed.
- Do not drive a car or operate machinery while taking narcotic pain medications.

#### **Diet:**

- Begin with clear liquids and light foods such as broth, and Jell-O.
- Progressively normalize your diet if you don't experience nausea, vomiting, or bloating.

#### **Activity:**

- When sleeping or resting, inclined positions (i.e.: reclining chair) and a pillow under the forearm for support may provide better comfort.
- Do not engage in activities that increase pain/swelling (lifting or any repetitive above shoulder level activities) of the first 7-10 days post operatively.
- Avoid long periods of sitting (without arm supported) or long distance traveling for 2 weeks.
- Sex – no restrictions.
- No driving until instructed otherwise by Dr. Seneviratne.
- May return to sedentary work only or school 3-4 days after surgery. 1 week off is recommended.

#### **Sling/Immobilizer:**

- For biceps tenodesis, labral repairs, and rotator cuff repairs the sling should be used at all times (except for hygiene and exercises). You will need to wear the sling for 3-6 weeks depending on the procedure performed unless otherwise specified.
- For Subacromial decompression, biceps tenotomy, and AC joint resection the sling should be worn for comfort only. Typically the sling can be discontinued after 1 week.

#### **Exercise:**

- Begin pendulum exercises, elbow, wrist, and hand range of motion exercises 24 hours after surgery.
- Complete 3-4 times per day until your first post operative visit.
- If biceps tenodesis was performed, do not do any active elbow flexion (bending). Passive elbow flexion is permitted.
- Formal outpatient physical therapy will begin after your first post operative visit.

#### **Wound Care:**

- Keep your operative dressing on for 48 hours.
- Remove all cotton and yellow gauze 48 hours after your surgery.

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- Use Band-Aids to cover portal incisions.
- You may shower 48 hours after surgery
- Please use CAUTION!! Be careful not to slip, twist, or fall. A stool placed in the shower so you can sit is a great idea.
- Do not soak in a bathtub, hot tub, or pool until the doctor tells you it is O.K. to do so.
- Once you are done showering pat the wound dry and reapply a dry dressing as directed above.

**Ice/Cryotherapy:**

- You should use the Cryocuff machine, the Gameready machine, or ice on the shoulder as often as possible (especially after exercising) to reduce swelling and discomfort. This should begin immediately after surgery.
- If using an ice pack, do not ice the shoulder more than 20 minutes at a time. Let the shoulder warm up before reapplication. Avoid getting your wound wet.
- If you were prescribed a Cryocuff or Gameready cold therapy machine you may keep this on the shoulder continuously, but follow the instructions provided by the vendor of the machine.

**Common Concerns:**

- A sudden rush or feeling of fullness with pain when going from a sitting to a standing position in the shoulder is common after surgery.
- Bruising and/or swelling around the shoulder, arm, and chest are common after surgery. This usually occurs 3-4 days after surgery. To relieve this discomfort it is best to ice the shoulder.

**Please call if:**

- If at any time you have significant pain not controlled with medication.
- Excessive bleeding.
- Pain that is not controlled with medications.
- Numbness in leg lasting more than 18 to 24 hours.
- Fever (>101.5 degrees F) especially if accompanied by chills (low grade fever is common and not be concerned with).
- Any difficulty breathing or heaviness in the chest.

**Follow-up visit:**

- You need to see Dr. Seneviratne or his team in about one week following surgery for your first post-op visit. At that time your sutures (stitches) will be removed.
- Physical therapy will be started at this time if indicated.

**Follow-up care/Questions**

- Dr. Seneviratne or a member of his team will call you on the first day after surgery to address any questions or concerns. If you have not been contacted within 48 hours please call the office at (212) 636 8290.
- If you do not already have a post op appointment scheduled, please contact the office during normal business hours and ask for appointment scheduling

REMEMBER - these are only guidelines for what to expect following arthroscopic shoulder surgery. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your shoulder please do not hesitate to call the office at any time.