

# Post-Operative Instructions

## Shoulder Surgery

### DIET

- Begin with clear liquids and light foods (jello, soups, etc).
- Advance to normal diet as tolerated.

### WOUND CARE

- Maintain operative dressing, loosen bandage if swelling of the elbow, wrist, or hand occurs.
- It is normal for the shoulder to bleed and swell following surgery – if blood soaks onto the bandage, reinforce with additional dressing.
- Remove surgical dressing on the second post-operative day – if minimal drainage is present, apply waterproof band-aids over incisions and change daily.
- To avoid infection, keep surgical incisions clean and dry – you may shower by placing waterproof band-aids over incisions. Please remember to change band-aids daily.
- No immersion of operative arm (i.e. bath).

### MEDICATIONS

- Most patients will require narcotic pain medication for a short period of time – this can be taken as directed per pharmacy.
- Common side effects of the pain medication are nausea, drowsiness, and constipation – to decrease the side effects, take medication with food – if constipation occurs, consider taking an over-the-counter laxative.
- If you are having problems with nausea and vomiting, contact the office to possibly have your medication changed (847-570-2825).
- Do not drive a car or operate machinery while taking the narcotic medication.
- Ibuprophen 200-400 mg (i.e. Advil) may be taken in between the narcotic medication doses to help supplement pain relief, reduce overall amount of pain medication required, and increase the time intervals between narcotic pain medication dosages.
- Take one adult Aspirin (325 mg) a day x 10 days to help prevent blood clots. Do not take if allergic or medically unable.

### 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 which increase pain/swelling (lifting or any repetitive above shoulder level activities) over the first 7-10 days following surgery.
- Avoid long periods of sitting (without arm supported) or long distance traveling for 2 weeks.
- No driving until instructed otherwise by Dr. Levin.
- May return to sedentary work only or school 3-4 days after surgery, if pain is tolerable.
- If you plan on flying within the first month of surgery, let Dr. Levin know so he can prescribe Lovenox (blood thinner). Dr. Levin recommends avoiding flying in the first post-op month.

### IMMOBILIZER

- Sling should be worn at all times (except for hygiene and exercises).

## **ICE THERAPY**

- Begin immediately after surgery.
- Use ice machine continuously or ice packs (if machine is not prescribed depending upon insurance coverage) every 2 hours for 20 minute intervals daily until your first post-operative visit – remember to keep arm supported while icing.
- Never apply ice directly against skin. Always have a towel or layer of clothing between ice and skin.

## **EXERCISE**

- Begin pendulum exercises 24 hours after surgery – complete 3-4 sets of 10-15 reps per day. Begin elbow, wrist, and hand range of motion 24 hours after surgery. Complete 3-4 times per day until first post-operative visit.
- If rotator cuff repair is done with a biceps tenodesis, do not perform elbow range of motion actively.
- Formal physical therapy (PT) will usually begin 3-4 weeks after surgery. You will be given a prescription for PT by Dr. Levin at that time.

## **EMERGENCIES \*\***

- Contact Dr. Levin or Tracy Bennett, 847-570-2825 if any of the following are present:
  - Painful swelling or numbness
  - Unrelenting pain
  - Fever (over 101° – it is normal to have a low grade fever for the first day or two following surgery) or chills
  - Redness around incisions
  - Color change in wrist or hand, i.e. blue or purple
  - Continuous drainage or bleeding from incision (a small amount of drainage is expected)
  - Difficulty breathing
  - Excessive nausea/vomiting

\*\* If you have an emergency after office hours or on the weekend, call 847-570-2825 and you will be connected to our page service.

\*\* If you have an emergency that requires immediate attention, proceed to the nearest emergency room.

## **FOLLOW-UP CARE/QUESTIONS**

- If you do not already have a post-operative appointment scheduled, please contact the scheduling office during normal office hours at 847-570-2825 and schedule an appointment for 2-5 days post-op.