

SCOS SPORTS MEDICINE

Dr. Scott Graham

Post-Operative Instructions for Arthroscopic Rotator Cuff Repair

SURGERY- On the day of surgery, wear a pair of comfortable athletic shorts which will stay on you during surgery. A shirt which buttons up the front is easiest to put back on over your dressings and sling after surgery. At the end of surgery, your shoulder will be injected with a long acting anesthetic which will help to reduce pain. It will wear off between 12 – 36 hours after surgery at which time it will be normal for your pain to increase. If you are too active on the day of surgery or the first post-operative day, your pain and swelling will be worse once the analgesic injection wears off.

MEDICATIONS- Unless you have an allergy or a history of stomach ulcers, begin taking an over-the-counter anti-inflammatory medication such as Aleve twice a day, but only for 7 days. It will help to keep your pain reduced without the side effects that accompany the prescription narcotic medication. You may also take your prescription pain medication when needed. Take 1 pill at a time. You may take another within 6 hours. Remember to take your medications with food, not on an empty stomach. As you may know, the prescribed pain medication has a tendency to constipate patients. In order to prevent constipation, drink plenty of water, eat fruit, and if necessary take a stool softener/laxative which you may purchase over-the-counter. You may consult with the pharmacist.

ACTIVITY- You should rest after surgery and slowly increase your activity as tolerated. Most people find that sleeping sitting up is most comfortable, but you may sleep however you like with your sling on. Wear your sling at all times for 4 weeks after surgery. However, you may remove it a few times a day to shower, change clothes and do active elbow motion to prevent elbow stiffness. During the day, bend and straighten your elbow multiple times throughout the day with your sling off.

DRESSINGS- You may remove your dressings 48 hours after surgery. Leave the white Steri-Strips on. They should fall off by 10 days but if they don't you may remove them at that time. You will need to wait 5 days before getting the wounds wet in a shower. Do not soak in a tub, spa or pool until 2 weeks after surgery.

R-I-C-E

Rest- Leave your shoulder alone. Do not lift it for 6 weeks after surgery. Simple early usage of your hand for activities such as computer work is fine.

Ice- Use an ice bag or circulating ice pump to reduce pain and swelling. Apply to your shoulder for 30 min at a time and repeat multiple times throughout each day for 2 weeks. If you ice for longer than 30 min at a time it may cause frostbite. Remember not to place the ice directly on your skin, instead place a light towel under the ice pack or pad. Do not fall asleep while icing.

Compression- Shoulder compression is difficult and not necessarily indicated.

Elevation- Elevation of the shoulder can be done by sitting up during the day and night but it is not mandatory. Your hand and forearm may get swollen while in the sling after surgery due to them being dependent, hanging down and having little muscle activity. To help this, repetitively do hand grasping exercises with the ball from the sling.

Your post-operative appointment should be scheduled at the time of your pre-operative appointment and is usually about 7 days after surgery. Contact Dr. Graham or his Medical Assistant Brittany at (949)586-3200 x252 if you have any questions.