

## **POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS**

### **ROTATOR CUFF REPAIR**

#### **DIET**

- Begin with clear liquids and light foods (jellos, soups, etc.)
- Progress to your normal diet if you are not nauseated

#### **WOUND CARE**

- Maintain your 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, do not become alarmed – reinforce with additional dressing
- Remove surgical dressing on the third post-operative day – if minimal drainage is present, apply band-aids over incisions and change daily
- To avoid infection, keep surgical incisions clean and dry – you may shower by placing a large garbage bag over your sling starting the day after surgery – NO immersion of operative arm (i.e. bath)

#### **MEDICATIONS**

- Pain medication is injected into the wound and shoulder joint during surgery – this will wear off within 8-12 hours
- Most patients will require some narcotic pain medication for a short period of time – this can be taken as per directions on the bottle
- 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 (216-844-6097 – ask for Jessie)
- Do not drive a car or operate machinery while taking the narcotic medication
- Ibuprofen 200-400mg (i.e. Advil) may be taken in between the narcotic pain medication to help smooth out the post-operative 'peaks and valleys', reduce overall amount of pain medication required, and increase the time intervals between narcotic pain medication usage

#### **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 physician
- May return to sedentary work ONLY or school 3-4 days after surgery, if pain is tolerable

#### **IMMOBILIZER**

- Your sling with supporting abduction pillow should be worn at all times (except for hygiene and exercises)
- Maintain your elbow position against the pillow and even with your side or in front of this position to minimize stress on the repair

#### **ICE THERAPY**

- Begin immediately after surgery
- Use icing machine continuously or ice packs (if machine not prescribed) every 2 hours for 20 minutes daily until your first post-operative visit

## **EXERCISE**

- Begin pendulum, elbow, wrist, and hand exercises 24 hours after surgery – complete 3-4 times per day until your first post-operative visit
- While maintaining your arm against the pillow but out of the sling, 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 begin after your first post-operative visit

## **EMERGENCIES**

- Contact Dr. Salata at 216-844-6097 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
  - 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, please call 216-691-6067 and you will be connected to our answering service – they will contact Dr. Salata or one of his fellows if he is unavailable. Do NOT call the hospital or surgicenter.

\*\*If you have an emergency that requires immediate attention, proceed to the nearest emergency room or dial 911.

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

- If you have questions that arise at any time, whether for Dr. Salata or Jessie, please send an e-mail to Jessie (Jessie.Hammond@uhhospitals.org) for the fastest reply.
- If e-mail is not an option please call Jessie directly (216-844-6097).
- If you do not already have a post-operative appointment scheduled, please contact the office during normal office hours (216-844-6097).