



James S. Kercher, M.D.
Sports Medicine, Shoulder &
Knee Surgery, Cartilage Restoration

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 678-732-1337.
- Do not drive a car or operate machinery while taking the narcotic medication
- Ibuprofen 400-600mg (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 – remember to keep arm supported while icing

EXERCISE

- Pendulum exercises should start 2-3 days after surgery
- 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. Kercher's Clinical Assistant, Alicia Henderson, at 678-732-1337 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, contact the main office number at 404-355-0743, you will be connected to our on call Nurse – they can then contact the Doctor on Call if warranted. Do NOT call the hospital or surgicenter.

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

FOLLOW-UP CARE/QUESTIONS

- If you have additional questions that arise at any time for Dr. Kercher or in general, please send an email to Alicia (ahenderson@pocatlanta.com) or call Alicia directly at 678-732-1337.
- If you do not already have a post-operative appointment scheduled, please contact the office during normal office hours at 404-355-0743 and ask for appointment scheduling.