

AUSTIN BONE & JOINT CLINIC
1015 E. 32ND ST. #101
(512) 477-6341

POSTOPERATIVE ROTATOR CUFF REPAIR INSTRUCTIONS

➤ **Control of swelling**

Use ice packs frequently on the shoulder for the first week or two postop, then after exercise to control swelling.

➤ **Sling Use**

The sling is to be on at all times except for the following circumstances:

1. Exercise
2. Bathing
3. To change clothes
4. When seated or in bed with the arm supported in the lap.

When dressing, put the arm in the shirt sleeve, then put on the sling.

The swathe or wrap is optional, except sleep, when it must be used to prevent the arm from slipping out of the sling.

➤ **Wound Care**

Expect some blood-tinged drainage from the incisions. Because of this drainage, frequent dressing changes may be needed over the first few days after surgery. Whenever the dressing becomes moist, apply a new dry dressing using sterile 4x4 gauze sponges (available in pharmacies). Before applying the dressing, clean the site with alcohol, betadine, or peroxide. Once the drainage stops, the dressing only needs to be changed every to two three days. **Contact your doctor if you develop any of the following: foul smelling drainage or foul odor from the incision, excessive swelling or redness around the incision, pus, or excessive pain.**

➤ **Pain Medication**

A prescription for pain medication has been provided for you. Follow the directions on the bottle. Do not let the pain get out of control, before using the medication, especially in the first few days after surgery. It is advisable to supplement the prescription pain medication with ibuprofen (3 tablets 3 times a day) or Alleve (one tablet twice a day) for the first week or two. **Do not take these medications if your doctor has already prescribed an anti-inflammatory medication.**

➤ **Nausea and Itching**

Over the counter Benadryl may be taken, one or two tablets every five hours, as needed for nausea and/or itching.

➤ **Use of the Arm**

You are not to lift the arm away from the side, under the arm's own power. This is to be done only with the pulley, the opposite arm, or if someone lifts the arm for you.

However, you can use the arm for light activities with the elbow at the side. Activities such as writing and typing are permitted.

POSTOPERATIVE ROTATOR CUFF REPAIR INSTRUCTIONS (CONT)

➤ **Exercises**

Follow the exercise program given to you by the therapists at the hospital. This is a passive program. In other words, all motion is done by using the other arm or someone does it for you. You are not to attempt to lift the arm under its own power. Do the prescribed exercises 2-3 times per day, about 10-20 repetitions for each exercise.

➤ **Formal Physical Therapy**

This will be initiated some time after the first follow up visit, if your doctor deems it necessary. It is important to do the exercises (physical therapy) given to you in the hospital. Do these exercises 2-3 times per day, 10 repetitions each.

➤ **Bathing**

Keep the operative site dry when bathing, until the staples are out. The wound can be covered with plastic wrap and secured with waterproof tape when bathing.

➤ **Pain pump**

Your doctor may use a pain pump to reduce postop pain. This consists of a syringe, filled with a local anesthetic, connected to a catheter (small tube) coming from the wound. You will need to remove the syringe when it is empty, usually about 48 hours postop. Simply remove the tape holding the catheter to the skin and pull out the catheter. Expect some bleeding when the catheter is removed. Apply a dressing as needed.

➤ **Warning Signs**

Expect a slight temperature elevation after surgery. For low grade temperature elevation, try walking, coughing, deep breathing, and Tylenol. Should your temperature exceed 101.5 degrees, call your doctor. If any signs of infection appear, such as red streaks or pus from the wound, call your doctor.

➤ **Follow up Appointments**

Call the office (Central 477-6341, Northwest 795-8812) as soon as you get home, or the next business day, to arrange a follow up visit with your doctor 5-10 days after your surgery.

➤ **How to Contact Your Doctor**

There are never any dumb questions. If you have any concerns, during regular business hours, please call at either office (Central-St. David's 472-9011 or 477-6341; Northwest 795-8812). After regular business hours or on weekends, the doctor "on call" can be contacted through the Medical Exchange at 458-1121.

Signature

Date