



Jill McAngus, MD

## Rotator Cuff Repair - Postoperative Instructions

### Wound Care:

- After surgery, the wound is covered with gauze pads and tape. These should be left in place for 3 days. Due to the large amount of fluid used during arthroscopy, it is normal to see some bloody drainage on the dressings. If bright red blood soaks through the dressings, please call Dr. McAngus' office. After 3 days, the dressing can be removed and wounds covered with dry gauze or waterproof Band-Aids. Do not remove the paper tapes/strips or cut any of the visible sutures. You can reapply the ace wrap to control swelling.

### Medications:

- **Pain Control:** Local pain medication is injected into the shoulder during surgery – this will wear off within 4-6 hours. If you received a preoperative regional nerve block by anesthesia, this typically wears off in 12-24 hours. Most patients will require some narcotic pain medication (i.e. vicodin, norco, hydrocodone, or other codeine-derivative) for 1-2 days after surgery – please take as instructed. It is important not to drink alcohol or drive while taking narcotic medication. If your pain is minimal, you may discontinue the use of narcotics. Ibuprofen 600-800 mg (i.e. Advil) can be taken as needed in between doses of narcotic pain medication for additional pain control.
- **Blood Clot Prevention:** Unless otherwise instructed, take an aspirin 81 mg daily for 3 weeks following surgery. This may lower the risk of a blood clot developing after surgery. Should severe calf pain occur or significant swelling of calf and ankle, please call the doctor.
- **Constipation:** The use of narcotics can lead to constipation. Adequate hydration and over-the-counter stool softeners can minimize constipation problems.
- **Normal medications:** Resume the day after surgery unless otherwise instructed.

### Activity:

- Unless otherwise instructed, you should begin the pendulum and gentle passive range-of-motion exercises as demonstrated on the exercise handout on the first day after surgery. You may use your arm to assist with eating and personal hygiene unless specifically instructed not to by Dr. McAngus. You may not bear-weight or lift anything heavier than a cell phone or cup of coffee with your operative arm. Be sure to use and move your hand, wrist, and elbow in order to decrease swelling in your arm. While exercise is important, don't over-do it. Common sense is the rule.

#### Ice Therapy:

- Icing is very important for the first 5-7 postoperative days to decrease swelling and pain. While the post-op dressing is in place, icing can be continuous. Once the dressing is removed on the third operative day, ice can be applied for 15-20 minute periods, 3-4 times per day. Care must be taken with icing to avoid frostbite to the skin.

#### Showering:

- Once bandages are removed, you may shower regularly, but do not submerge in water or bathe.
- The operative bandage is waterproof and you can shower in this.

#### Sling/Immobilizer:

- Unless otherwise instructed, you should wear your postoperative sling/immobilizer at all times, including while sleeping. The sling can be taken off for showering; however, care must be taken to protect the shoulder at all times.

#### Sleep:

- Sleeping can be uncomfortable for the first 1-2 weeks after shoulder surgery. It can be helpful to sleep in a recliner-chair or in a semi-upright position.

#### Post-Operative Appointment:

- Dr. McAngus will need to reexamine you 12-14 days after your procedure. Please call the office (numbers on first page) to schedule a follow-up appointment.

#### Diet:

- The anesthetic drugs used during your surgery may cause nausea for the first 24 hours. Following surgery, begin with clear liquids and light foods. You can progress to your normal diet if not nauseated. If nausea and vomiting become severe, or if you show signs of dehydration (lack of urination), please call the doctor.

#### Driving:

- No driving until permitted by the doctor.

#### Work/School:

- May return to sedentary work or school 3-4 days after surgery, if pain is tolerable.

#### URGENT Information and Contacts:

- A low-grade fever (up to 100.5 degrees) is not uncommon in the first 48 hours. Please call the doctor with any temperature over 101 degrees.
- Please call the doctor if you have severe pain that your pain medication does not relieve, persistent numbness of the leg, fever over 101 degrees, difficulty with the cast or surgical incisions, difficulty breathing, chest pain, excessive nausea/vomiting, or if you experience redness or swelling in your thigh or calf.
- If unexpected problems occur and you need to speak to someone, please call the doctor (254- 595-3689). If calling after office hours or on the weekend, please leave a message or text. We will attempt to return these as quick as possible.
- If you have an emergency that requires immediate attention, proceed to the nearest emergency room.

#### Follow-Up Care/Questions:

- Dr. McAngus or Christi, LVN will call you after your surgery. If you have not been contacted within 48 hours of surgery, please reach out to Dr. McAngus' office.
- If you do not already have a postoperative appointment scheduled, please contact the office during normal office hours. Appointments should be arranged 12-14 days from surgery.
- Please call (254)595-3689 with any questions or concerns at any time.