

Sabrina Strickland, M.D.

The Hospital for Special Surgery
535 East 70th Street
New York, NY 10021
(212) 606-1725

Post-Operative Instructions
Rotator Cuff Repair

SLING

You will be wearing a removable sling after your surgery. This sling will remain on at all times (including sleep) until 6 weeks after your surgery. You should wear the sling at all times except for physical therapy. You will remove the sling 4 times a day to perform your exercises shown to you in the hospital the day of your surgery.

PHYSICAL THERAPY

PT is an important part of your recovery. You must see a physical therapist 2 times a week. In addition, you will perform your exercises at home 4 times a day. These exercises will consist of hand, wrist and elbow range of motion as well as specific exercises to prevent your shoulder from becoming stiff. **REMEMBER:** you must NOT raise your arm above your head by using your own muscle power. The therapist will raise your arm for you. This is called passive exercise. The sutures used to sew your rotator cuff together are strong, but by raising the arm by yourself you are applying too much tension to the repair!. If you need help finding a therapist, please let our office know.

BANDAGE

You will have bulky bandage over your operative shoulder. This bandage can be removed 2 days after your surgery and the sutures should be covered with Nexcare waterproof bandaids. Your sutures will be removed on your first office visit approximately 7-14 days post operatively.

SHOWERING

You must keep the incision dry to prevent an infection as it is healing. Once you remove the bandage you can take a shower. Try to avoid the shower from hitting the incisions directly. When you get out of the shower dry the shoulder completely and cover the incisions with dry bandaids. Do not apply creams, ointment or lotions to your incisions while they are still healing (approximately 3 weeks). You should wash under your arm daily.

MEDICATIONS

You will receive a prescription for pain medication prior to your discharge from the hospital. Take one tablet for mild to moderate pain and two tablets for more severe pain. Please make the hospital staff aware of any allergies you may have to avoid medical complications. You may also receive an anti-inflammatory medication to reduce swelling. This may be taken with your pain medication. If you find that you are constipated from the medications, please feel free to use an over the counter stool softener or laxitive.

COLD THERAPY UNIT/ ICE

Prevention of post-op swelling or inflammation is an important part of your recovery. Apply icepack/ gelpack/ frozen peas to the surgical site 20 minutes 4 to 6 times a day or use your cold therapy unit as directed in the instructions. Also, it is important to apply the ice/cold therapy 10-20 minutes after completing your physical therapy.

DRIVING

You may not drive while wearing a sling.

NORMAL SENSATIONS AND FINDING AFTER SURGERY

- a. Pain
- b. Swelling and warmth up to 2 weeks
- c. Small amounts of bloody drainage for first few days
- d. Numbness around the incision area
- e. Bruising
- f. Low grade temperature less than 101.0 for up to a week after surgery.
- g. Small amount of redness to the area where the sutures insert in the skin

NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IMMEDIATELY IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SIGNS OR SYMPTOMS OCCUR

- a. Change is noted to your incision (i.e. increased redness or drainage)
- b. Temperature greater than 101.0
- c. Fever, chills, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea
- d. Sutures become loose or fall out and incision becomes open
- e. Drainage becomes yellow, puss like or foul smelling
- f. Increased pain unrelieved by medication or measures mentioned above.

REMEMBER TO CALL OUR OFFICE TO SCHEDULE YOUR POST-OPERATIVE APPOINTMENT (APPROXIMATELY 7-14 DAYS FROM SURGERY)