

Hasani Swindell, M.D.

Sports Medicine
Shoulder, Elbow & Knee Arthroscopy
Shoulder Replacement Surgery
T: 718.246.8700
F: 718.246.8701

**DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS AND PHYSICAL THERAPY PROTOCOL:
Distal Biceps Repair**

- ◇ Initial recovery after elbow surgery entails healing, controlling swelling and discomfort. The following instructions are intended as a guide to help you achieve these goals until your 1st postoperative visit.

- ◇ COMFORT
 - **Cold Therapy**
 - If you elected to receive the **circulating cooling device**, this can be used continuously for the first 3 days, (while the initial post-op dressing is on). After 3 days, the cooling device should be applied 3 times a day for 20-30 minute interval.
 - For technical questions regarding the ice machine, please contact the vendor directly using the telephone number on the device
 - If you elected to receive the **gel wrap**, this may be applied for 20 minutes on, 20 minutes off as needed. You may apply this over the post-op dressing. Once the dressing is removed, be sure to place a barrier (shirt, towel, cloth, etc) between your skin and the gel wrap.
 - If you elected to use **regular ice**, this may be applied for 20 minutes on, 20 minutes off as needed. You may apply this over the post-op dressing. Once the dressing is removed, be sure to place a barrier (shirt, towel, cloth, etc) between your skin and the bag of ice
 - ****Remember to keep the extremity elevated while icing when able****
 - **Medication**
 - Pain Medication – Take medications as prescribed, but only as often as necessary. Avoid alcohol and driving if you are taking pain medication
 - You have been provided a narcotic prescription postoperatively. Use this medication **ONLY** for moderate to severe pain
 - **You are allowed two (2) refills of your narcotic prescription if necessary**

Hasani Swindell, M.D.

Sports Medicine
Shoulder, Elbow & Knee Arthroscopy
Shoulder Replacement Surgery

T: 718.246.8700

F: 718.246.8701

- When refilling pain medication, lowering the dose/strength or switching to a non-narcotic prescription is recommended as soon as possible.
- Extra strength Tylenol may be used for mild pain
- Over the counter anti-inflammatory medication (Ibuprofen, Aleve, Motrin, etc.) should be **avoided** for the first 4 weeks following surgery
- Anti-coagulation medication: You may have been prescribed a medication to prevent postoperative blood clots might be prescribed (Aspirin, Lovenox, etc.) this is the only medication that MUST be taken as prescribed until directed to stop by Dr. Swindell
- Nausea medication: Zofran (Ondansetron) has been prescribed for nausea. You may take this as needed per the prescription instructions
- Constipation medication: Colace has been prescribed for constipation. Both your pain medication and the anesthesia from your procedure can cause constipation. Take this as needed
- **Driving** – Driving is **NOT** permitted as long as the sling/splint is necessary

◇ ACTIVITIES

- You are immobilized with a splint/sling, full time for approximately the first 2 weeks. Your doctor can tell you when you can remove this during your 1st postoperative visit. The sling may be removed for exercises.
- Physical therapy will begin some time after surgery.
- Athletic activities such as throwing, lifting, swimming, bicycling, jogging, running and all sports should be avoided until cleared by Dr. Swindell.

◇ WOUND CARE

- **Bathing** – Tub Bathing, swimming and soaking of the upper extremity **should be avoided** until allowed by your doctor (Usually 2-3 weeks after your surgery. Keep the dressing on, clean and dry after surgery.
 - If you ARE NOT in a splint, you can shower 3 days after surgery with WATERPROOF band-aids on. Apply new band aids after showering
 - If you ARE in a splint, you may only sponge bathe but you must cover with splint with a bag to cover and protect the splint from water
 - ****If the splint is damaged in any way, it may affect your healing or increase the risk of a complication****

Hasani Swindell, M.D.

Sports Medicine
Shoulder, Elbow & Knee Arthroscopy
Shoulder Replacement Surgery
T: 718.246.8700
F: 718.246.8701

- Use caution when showering. Slipping or falling puts you at risk for re-injury
- **Dressings**
 - Your sling is to remain in place at all times except when in physical therapy or when showering
 - **If you are in a splint**, it should remain on until your first postoperative appointment
- ◇ EATING
 - Your first few meals after surgery should include light, easily digestible foods and plenty of liquids, since some people experience nausea as a temporary reaction to anesthesia
 - Progress to your normal diet if you are not nauseated
- ◇ EMERGENCIES:
 - Contact Dr. Swindell's team at 718-246-8700 or hws2109@cumc.columbia.edu if any of the following are present:
 - Painful swelling or numbness (note that some swelling and numbness is normal).
 - 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 arm
 - Continuous drainage or bleeding from incision (a small amount of drainage is expected).
 - Difficulty breathing
 - Excessive nausea /vomiting
 - Calf pain
 - If you have an emergency after office hours or on the weekend, contact the office at 718-246-8700 and you will be connected to our answering service.
 - If you are enrolled in Epic Connect, you can also reach the office through the patient portal

Hasani Swindell, M.D.

Sports Medicine
Shoulder, Elbow & Knee Arthroscopy
Shoulder Replacement Surgery

T: 718.246.8700

F: 718.246.8701

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

◇ FOLLOW-UP CARE /QUESTIONS

- If you do not already have a post-operative appointment scheduled, please contact our scheduler at 718-246-8700 schedule.
- Typically the first post-operative appointment following surgery is 10-14 days following surgery.
- At your first post operative appointment, you will have a wound check, go over physical therapy protocols and we will answer any questions you may have about the procedure.