

**Hasani Swindell, M.D.**

Sports Medicine  
Shoulder, Elbow & Knee Arthroscopy  
Shoulder Replacement Surgery  
**T:** 718.246.8700  
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**DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS AND PHYSICAL THERAPY PROTOCOL:  
Triceps Tendon 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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**

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- 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 post-operative 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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\*\***

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- 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](mailto: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

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- 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.