

Rotator Cuff Repair

Post Operative Instructions

Brad Carofino M.D.

Shoulder, Elbow, Hand Surgery
Atlantic Orthopaedic Specialists

Please contact with questions
carofinob@atlanticortho.com

Secretary: Katrina Riddick
757-321-3300

What operation did I have?

You had an arthroscopic rotator cuff repair. This means that the torn muscles were reattached inside the shoulder. This operation is done with several small incision using a camera and instruments to work inside your shoulder.

What should I expect the day of surgery?

A nerve block was administered before your surgery. This will cause your arm to be numb. That usually lasts until the night of surgery or the next day. When the block wears off, the shoulder is often very painful. I recommend that you begin taking your pain medication before the block wears off so that you do not “fall behind the pain”. You should also take your pain medication before going to sleep.

When you get home after surgery you should try to find a comfortable place to sit still and rest. A recliner chair is preferable. Many patients will sleep in a recliner for weeks after surgery because the find it is more comfortable than laying down flat.

What medications should I be taking?

We will prescribe a pain medication for after surgery. You should plan to take this regularly for the first two days and then as needed. We will also provide a prescription for Zofran a nausea medication. You should only take this if needed, and may want to wait to fill the prescription only if needed.

Finally, you will be given a prescription for Colace a stool softener to prevent constipation. You should take this as long as you are taking pain medication.

Should I ice my shoulder?

Icing the shoulder for the first two days after surgery will help decrease pain and swelling. I recommend that you ice as much as possible. However, after two hours on the ice should be removed for thirty minutes. After two days you may continue to ice the shoulder if you find it helpful.

What can I do with my arm and hand?

You may move your hand, wrist and elbow as much as you like with the sling on. You can use your hand for activity but should not lift anything heavier than a coffee cup. You

should not move your shoulder except under the direction of a physical therapist.

Can I remove the sling?

You may remove the sling for showering, and should put it back on after.

Can I remove the bandages?

After three days you may take off the bandages, shower, pat dry the incisions and apply Band Aids or small dressings.

When should I have a return appointment?

You should return to see Dr. Carofino in 12-14 days to have your stitches removed. Please call Katrina Riddick to schedule this appointment. 757-321-3300.

Can I drive?

It is your responsibility to determine if you can safely drive. You cannot drive while you are taking narcotics.

When will physical therapy begin?

The physical therapy for your surgery depends on the size of your rotator cuff tear. For small to medium size tears therapy begins the first week after surgery. For large or massive tears therapy will begin at six weeks after surgery. We will discuss this , and Katrina will contact you to start therapy.

If you develop signs of an infection such as fevers, increasing pain, redness at your incision site, pus drainage from incision you should notify our office immediately, or go the emergency department.