



## WHAT TO EXPECT WITH YOUR 'AC JOINT RECONSTRUCTION' SURGERY

**PLEASE READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS COMPLETELY AND WHEN POSSIBLE ASK FOR CLARIFICATION IF FROM YOUR NURSE OR DOCTOR BEFORE LEAVING THE HOSPITAL.**

**\*DO NOT EAT OR DRINK ANYTHING AFTER MIDNIGHT THE NIGHT PRIOR TO SURGERY.**

- You will be taken to the recovery room after your surgery, and discharged home 1-2 hours after you are comfortable.
- Please have someone available to drive you home, as you will not be allowed to drive yourself home.

### **PAIN CONTROL:**

- Pain medications will be provided during your pre-operative visit. \*Please have these filled out well in advance to your surgery.
- You may receive a nerve block in addition to general anesthesia. \*A nerve block helps to control pain after surgery and your shoulder may be numb for 10-12 hours.
- Make certain to take your prescribed pain medication before the nerve block wears off. You should take your first oral pain medication when you get home from the hospital. This way you will be more comfortable and have less difficulty managing your pain.
- Always take your medications as directed.

### **SWELLING:**

- It is normal to have swelling and discomfort in the shoulder for 5-6 weeks after surgery.
- It is normal to have some discoloration of the skin around the incision. You may also note some swelling in the chest, arm and hand. \*This may last for 3-4 weeks after surgery. (Performing your exercises will help decrease this swelling)
- Apply ice bags to control swelling. Ice should be applied every 1-2 hours, for 20-30 minutes at a time. Put a thin towel or T-shirt next to your skin if using ice in a plastic bag.



- **Icing is most important in the first 48-72 hours**, although many people find that continuing it beyond that lessens their pain.
- Many patients find that lying down increases their discomfort. Many patients find it more comfortable to sleep in a recliner during the first 6 wks after surgery, or propped up in bed. A pillow placed behind your elbow may also help.

## POST-OP MEDICATIONS:

You may be given the following prescriptions for use after surgery:

- o **Percocet 10/325 mg (\*this is your back-up pain medication)**: take 1-2 pills as needed if you still have pain after the Morphine Sulfate
- o **Mobic 15mg or Celebrex 200mg (anti-inflammatory)**: take for first 10 days to help with pain and inflammation
- o **Colace 100mg (stool softener)**: take 1 tab 2-3 times a day while taking the pain medications as these often make patients constipated.
- o **Zofran 4mg (anti-nausea)**: take 1 tab every 6 hours as needed for nausea (can be a side-effect after anesthesia)

\*IF YOU HAVE ANY ADVERSE EFFECTS WITH THE MEDICATIONS, PLEASE CALL OUR OFFICE.

## WOUND CARE:

- A waterproof dressing will be placed over your incision. This will be removed at the 2 week Post\_Op visit.
- You may shower on Post-Op Day #3. Please minimize direct water pressure to the dressing. You may remove the sling for showering, but keep a water resistant pillow under the arm to keep both the elbow and shoulder away from the body (mimicking the abduction sling). Gently pat the area dry. \*Do not soak the shoulder in water.
- **DO NOT** go swimming in the pool, jacuzzi, sauna or ocean until your sutures are removed.



## **FOLLOW-UP:**

- Schedule a follow-up appointment for your suture removal, 10-14 days post-operatively.
- If you develop a Fever (>101.5), Redness or Drainage from the surgical incision site, please call our office to arrange for an evaluation.
- Plan to take a few days off work.
- Driving is usually safe 4-6 weeks after surgery.

## **POST-OPERATIVE REHAB:**

- Wear a sling for a total of six weeks.
- No lifting any weight for a minimum of six weeks: NON-WEIGHT BEARING X 6 WEEKS
- Remove your sling 3-4 times a day to move your fingers, hands, wrist and elbow. This will help reduce the swelling.
- Wear the sling at all times except when doing your exercises.
- No other shoulder exercises should be done for the first 2 weeks.
- The sling must be kept on at all other times including sleep.
- Physical Therapy will usually start approximately 2-3 weeks after surgery.
- This will be confirmed at your first post-op follow-up.

\*IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CALL OR EMAIL OUR OFFICE.

**Have a speedy recovery!**