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POST OP DISTAL BICEPS REPAIR v1.1

You are recovering from reconstructive biceps tendon surgery. The following instructions are to help make your recovery as rapid and successful as possible. This information is designed to answer some of the most frequently asked questions regarding what to expect and what to do after upper extremity surgery. These are general guidelines, if you have any questions or concerns, please call our office: 24/7, (404) 355-0743.

1. Keep your splint or elbow brace clean and dry at all times. DO NOT get it wet. You may shower by covering your splint/brace with a cast cover (available at local drug stores) or by using a plastic garbage bag and some tape.
2. **DO NOT** put any weight on your operative arm. Doing so may disrupt the repair. You may use a sling as needed for comfort but do not have to stay in the sling at all times. You may sleep without the sling.
3. Strict elevation of your incision above heart-level is recommended whenever possible during the first 72 hours
4. You may apply a bag of ice to your elbow and/or arm, 30 minutes on/off as needed but never directly on the skin, although the padding of your splint may prevent the coolness from penetrating down to your wrist.
5. If you received a nerve block from anesthesia, your arm may be numb and weak for up to 36 hours. Remember to start taking your pain medication, as instructed, once you are home and able to eat and drink. This will make sure there is pain medication in your system ready to treat any pain that may result when the nerve block or locally administered numbing medicine at the incision wears off.
6. Postoperative bleeding is not unusual. Reinforcing your dressing with additional gauze pads can be helpful.
7. Your postoperative therapy begins on the day of surgery. Initially, you should wiggle/flex/extend your fingers and wrist throughout the day. This will help to reduce finger/hand swelling, and also helps with preventing finger stiffness. Frequent finger flexion/extension can also help reduce the risk of blood clot.
8. Postoperative pain is common but should be controlled by the prescriptions given to you. Narcotics frequently cause itching and this can be treated with a non-drowsy over-the-counter antihistamine (Zyrtec, Allegra, Claritin etc...) or Benadryl if needed. Narcotics will also cause constipation. If you are using a narcotic pain medication, it is recommended that you take an over-the-counter stool softener twice daily, such as Colace or MiraLAX. If you have not had a bowel movement in 2 days, you should use a laxative of your choice to help facilitate a bowel movement. We often recommend Dulcolax in pill form.
9. Anti-nausea medication, such as Zofran, is often prescribed. Take this medication as needed.
10. You should take one 81 mg aspirin (baby aspirin) once a day for 30 days to reduce the possibility of blood clots.
11. You should take 1000mg of Tylenol (2 extra-strength tablets), every 8 hours with 2 Advil with food for the first 5 days after Surgery. While your nerve block is working and you are numb, please take 2 Tylenol and 2 Advil with just 1 narcotic pain pill every 8 hours with food to ensure a smooth transition from nerve block pain control to oral medication pain control. Once your nerve block wears off, you may follow the instructions on your narcotic pill bottle and use the narcotic pills for breakthrough pain every 4-6 hours as prescribed. Continue to take 2 Extra Strength Tylenol and 2 Advil with food every 8 hours.
IMPORTANT: Do not take Tylenol if you have a history of liver disease or allergy. Do not take Advil or other NSAIDS if you have diabetes, kidney disease, are on a blood thinner, or have a history of gastrointestinal ulcers.
12. Call your doctor's office for any fevers greater than 101.5 F or any other concerns. Present to the nearest Emergency Room for any chest pain, shortness of breath, intractable nausea/vomiting, or pain.
13. You will be seen in the office within 2 weeks after your surgery. Please call my clinical assistant – Sarah Williams ATC if you do not already have an appointment: (404) 355-0743 ext. 1615