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## POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS: OPEN SHOULDER SURGERY

### MEDICATION

- Most patients will be given a prescription for a narcotic pain medication, Norco (hydrocodone). Take as instructed for the first week, thereafter, take it only as needed.
- Common side effects of the pain medication are nausea, drowsiness and constipation – to decrease the side effects take the medication with food. An over the counter stool softener (Colace/Ducolax) may be taken to prevent constipation.
- You may not drive or operate heavy equipment while taking narcotic pain medicine. It is recommended to refrain from driving for six weeks after surgery to protect from re-injury and to avoid liability to you in the event of an accident.
- Blood clots are possible after any surgery, including shoulder replacement. We recommend you take an 81mg twice daily starting the day after surgery for one month to prevent blood clots. This can typically be taken with other medications, unless instructed otherwise.
- **If you stopped taking blood thinners (Coumadin, aspirin, Plavix etc) in anticipation of surgery you may resume them the day after surgery (post operative day #1). These blood thinners are to be taken in lieu of the 81mg twice daily aspirin dose to prevent blood clots, unless instructed otherwise.**
- Resume all home medications unless otherwise instructed.
- Call the office immediately if you are having an adverse reaction to the medication.

### WOUND CARE

- You may remove surgical **dressings at the five day** mark after your surgery unless otherwise instructed. If you have an appointment with the therapist on that day, your therapist may remove your dressings. Do not remove steri-strips (white small stickers on the skin). The steri-strips typically fall off on their own in a few weeks.
- Bruising and swelling in the arm and chest may persist for a few weeks. This is normal.
- To avoid infection, keep the surgical incisions clean and dry until five days after surgery, at which point you remove the dressing and may shower, letting water run over the steri-strips and the arm.
- You may remove the sling to shower but let your arm dangle to the side once dressings are removed. To access your armpit, lean forward slightly to let your arm dangle away from your side.
- NO submersion of wounds (bath, hot tub, pool) until a minimum of 2-3 weeks after surgery.



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#### ACTIVITY

- Do not attempt to use your own muscles to move your elbow away from your side or actively position the hand out in front of you until instructed.
- The involved arm may be taken out of the sling three times a day to bend and straighten your elbow. This can be performed when getting dressed and when showering.
- You may move the hand and wrist as tolerated, but the arm should remain in the sling at all times.
- Dr. Obermeyer will discuss with you the plan for formal physical therapy (PT) before surgery or at your first post-operative visit.

#### SLEEP

- When sleeping or resting, inclined positions (i.e. reclining chair or pillows behind you in bed) and a pillow under the forearm for support may provide better comfort.
- Sleep in your sling until instructed otherwise.

#### SLING

- Remain in sling at all times unless told otherwise, except when getting dressed, showering or exercising.

#### EMERGENCIES

- Contact Dr. Obermeyer's office (847-285-4200) if any of the following are present:
  - Uncontrolled nausea and vomiting, painful swelling or numbness, unrelenting pain, fever  $>101.5^{\circ}$  (low grade fevers 1-2 days after surgery are normal), redness or continuous drainage around incisions (a small amount is normal), color change in foot or toes, **calf pain**
- **If you are having chest pain or difficulty breathing, call 911 or go to the closest emergency room.**

#### FOLLOW-UP CARE

- Please make your first post-op visit 2 weeks after surgery if not done so already.
- **If you have any questions or concerns about the above please call Dr. Obermeyer's team at (847)285-4318.**