

INSTRUCTIONS FOLLOWING SOFT TISSUE SURGERY

PLEASE READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY. Sometimes the after-effects of soft tissue surgery are quite minimal, so not all of these instructions may apply. Common sense will often dictate what you should do. However, when in doubt, follow these guidelines or call our office at any time for clarification.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE DAY OF SURGERY

GENERAL GUIDELINES

In the first few hours following the surgery, the surgical site will usually feel “tight” more than painful. If you have a bandage or dressing over the surgical site, leave the dressing in place for 24 hours unless otherwise instructed.

EXERCISE CARE

Be very careful of the operative site in the first few days after surgery and avoid any direct pressure or contact with the surgical site. Take it easy for the first 24 hours and limit any strenuous activity.

OOZING

You may notice some oozing from the surgical site. This may cause some staining of the gauze bandage. This is expected following surgery. If necessary, you may place an additional gauze pad over the dressing and secure with some tape or a Band-Aid. Bleeding should not be severe. If you notice steady bleeding or persistent ooze, remove the surgical dressing and place a fresh gauze pad over the operative site. Use direct pressure on the suture line without letting up for 20-30 minutes. If the bleeding persists or if you notice significant swelling under the suture line, call the office immediately.

SWELLING

Often there is some minor swelling associated with soft tissue surgery. Swelling can be minimized by placing ice over the surgical area, always using a cloth placed between the skin and the ice to prevent skin freezing. The ice should be placed intermittently (twenty minutes on/twenty minutes off) for the first 12-24 hours after surgery. The swelling should be diffuse and soft, with very little pain elicited when the area is touched. If the swelling is tense or painful, call our office immediately.

PAIN

Unfortunately, most surgery is accompanied by some degree of discomfort. This can usually be managed by staying on a scheduled dose of over the counter pain medication (OTC's) such as Ibuprofen (Advil/Motrin) or acetaminophen (Tylenol). *If you take the first dose before the anesthetic has worn off, you will be able to manage any discomfort better.* Some surgeries might require stronger pain medication. In these cases, your doctor has given you a prescription to be filled by your pharmacist. **If you do not achieve adequate relief with OTC's**, you may supplement by alternating doses of OTC's and the prescription medication. If you received a narcotic prescription, please read the provided Opioid Notice accompanying this instructions sheet. Remember that the most severe discomfort is usually within the first six hours after the anesthetic wears off, after that your need for medicine should lessen. Sometimes more involved surgeries will cause quite a bit of pain and swelling. In these cases, you may notice that the pain and discomfort peaks at the third day and starts to feel better by the fourth day.

NAUSEA

Nausea is not an uncommon event after surgery. It is sometimes caused by post-operative pain medicines or medications received during sedation cases. Begin by minimizing pain medication intake and by taking small sips of clear liquids such as apple juice, flat Cola drinks or Ginger Ale. Once you feel more comfortable and can keep the liquids down, you can gradually introduce soft gentle foods and progress as you feel better. Call us if you do not feel better or if repeated vomiting is a problem.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE SECOND AND THIRD DAYS

DIET

Try to keep up your intake of food in the early post-operative period. Eat whatever foods you are comfortable with and be sure to maintain your fluid intake. Good nutrition is essential to optimum wound healing.

WOUND CARE

After 24 hours, you may remove the surgical dressing and leave the site exposed. To avoid excessive scarring, you will want to clean the wound thoroughly. Mix equal parts of hydrogen peroxide and water in a small cup. Using a cotton swab, gently clean the wound of all dried blood and scabs so that only skin and sutures are visible. After cleaning the suture line, apply a liberal amount of Bacitracin or Neosporin to the wound. Continue this routine at least two times a day until your scheduled follow-up visit.

SHOWERING

You may shower after 24 hours. The operative site can be exposed but be careful not to focus the water stream directly at the wound. Rather, allow the water to gently roll over the wound. Afterwards, use care in drying the skin around the wound and gently pat the incision dry.

SUNLIGHT

For the next 3 months, you should avoid direct sunlight to the operative site. Tanning pigments will become trapped in the healing wound leaving a darkened scar as the surrounding skin tan fades. This can be accomplished by keeping the area covered or liberally applying sunscreen to the area (at least SPF 30).

FOLLOW-UP

You will normally be seen 5-7 days after surgery for suture removal. If you do not have this appointment, please call our office as soon as possible to schedule your follow-up appointment. Once the sutures are removed, it will take another two to three weeks for the wound to reach an optimum level of strength. During this early healing period, it is essential to exercise care and avoid too much stress on the immature wound.

It is our desire that your recovery be as smooth and pleasant as possible. Following these instructions will assist you, but if you have questions about your progress, please call the office. If possible, please try to call during office hours. If necessary, a 24-hour paging service is available for after-hour contact with the doctor. Calling during office hours will afford a faster response.

MEDICATIONS FOLLOWING SURGERY

- Ibuprofen/Motrin (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory)- Take 3 (3 tablets X200mg = 600mg) tablets every 4 hours during waking hours for 48 hours and then use as needed. DO NOT USE IF PREGNANT.
- Tylenol #3 (Tylenol with codeine) - take as needed if stronger discomfort medication is required. Follow bottle directions. DO NOT DRIVE OR DRINK ALCOHOL.
- Norco- take as needed if stronger discomfort medication is required. Follow bottle directions. DO NOT DRIVE OR DRINK ALCOHOL.
- Percocet - take 1 tablet every 4 hours as needed if stronger discomfort medication is required. Follow bottle directions. DO NOT DRIVE OR DRINK ALCOHOL.
- Peridex - Follow bottle directions beginning the day after surgery.
- Antibiotic – Take till gone. Follow bottle directions.
- Other _____

WOMEN: IF AN ANTIBIOTIC HAS BEEN PRESCRIBED AND YOU ARE TAKING BIRTH CONTROL PILLS, ALTERNATE BIRTH CONTROL METHODS MUST BE USED FOR AT LEAST ONE MONTH.