
Distal Biceps Tendon Repair

Updated March 2020

SPLINT AND SLING:

- Keep your splint on until your follow-up appointment.
- You may wear a sling for comfort. If you do so, ensure you move your shoulder multiple times per day.
- At your two-week follow-up you will be told whether you need to continue wearing a splint/brace or not. You may need to wear a splint/brace for up to 6 weeks after surgery.

PHYSICAL THERAPY:

- Start formal physical therapy when orders are given. This may be anywhere from 2-6 weeks after surgery. You will be told when you can start physiotherapy at your follow-up appointment.
- Do exercises as tolerated.

WOUND CARE:

Shower:

- You may shower at any time after surgery but you must keep your splint from getting wet.
- **NO soaking in bathtub/hot tub or pool for first 2-3 weeks, even once the dressings are off.**

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF INFECTION:

- Excessive or worsening pain, increased redness around the incision sites, drainage from incisions that looks like pus and/or is foul smelling, if fever runs above 38.5°C.
- If any of the above symptoms occur call Central Alberta Orthopedics at 403-309-2001 or go to the emergency department right away.

CONTROL OF PAIN AND SWELLING:

Pain Medication:

- For the first few days take your pain medication regularly as instructed, then wean as tolerated. Avoid taking pain medications on an empty stomach, as it can make you nauseous.
- Wean yourself off of Percocet/Tramacet to Extra Strength Tylenol (acetaminophen) by **Day 5** after surgery.

PREVENTING BLOOD CLOTS

- Make sure you get up and walk around as much as possible; mobilizing helps prevent clots.
- Take the blood thinner your surgeon prescribed.

Signs and Symptoms of Blood Clots:

- Severe and worsening pain and swelling in calf muscle.
- If any of the above symptoms occur call Health Link at 8-1-1 or go to the emergency department right away.

EXERCISES

1. Grip Strengthening

- a. Make as tight of a fist as you can. Hold for 10 seconds. Repeat 30 times, 3 times per day.
- #### **2. Pendulum exercises (described as if RIGHT shoulder was operated on)**
- a. Bend over at the waist. Bend right elbow 90 degrees and support with left hand.
 - b. It may be easier to do this exercise sitting down.
 - c. This is to be done without using shoulder muscles but with the assistance of the non-surgical hand to make the motion.
 - d. Make small circles clockwise and counter-clockwise. Repeat 30 times each way, 3 times per day.

EXPECTED RECOVERY:

- Return to seated work 2-4 weeks after surgery.
- Return to manual labor at 4-6 months.

DRIVING

- No driving while you are required to wear your splint or sling.
- You may return to driving a vehicle (non-commercial) when you are no longer affected by pain, no longer wearing a splint or brace, under the influence of pain medications, able to **fully weight bear on your surgical arm**, and are confident that you can react appropriately in an emergency.

Due to the anesthetic, for the next 24 hours: Do NOT drive, sign legal documents, provide child care on your own or consume alcohol.