

Pectoralis Major Repair

Updated March 2020

SLING:

- At all times for 4 weeks (may require 6 weeks depending on extent of repair).
- When dressing, put your operative arm in the sleeve first. When getting undressed, take your operative arm out last. Loose fitting, button-down shirts are recommended.

PHYSICAL THERAPY:

- Start formal physical therapy when orders are given after your first post-operative appointment.
- Do the below listed exercises before physiotherapy starts.

WOUND CARE:

Bandages:

- On post op day 3 you can remove your dressing. Leave white strips in place, if you have them. You may cover the incisions with new bandages.

Shower:

- You may shower at post-op day 3 once your bandages are off.
- After bandages have been removed you may shower without covering incision sites, keep out of direct spray from water and pat dry.
- Keep white strips on incision, they may fall off in the shower.
- You may take your sling off to shower, keep your arm across your chest.
- **NO soaking in bathtub/hot tub or pool for first 2-3 weeks and scabs have fallen 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.

Cold Therapy:

- If you have a cold therapy machine, use as much as possible as per device instructions.
- If you don't have cold therapy machine, you can remove outer bandage to ice for 20-30 minutes, at least four times for several days. Use more frequently as needed, helps in reducing pain. Avoid placing ice directly on bare skin to prevent frostbite and give a break of 30 minutes in between sessions.

Sleeping:

- It will help if you sleep with pillows behind your back and shoulder. Some patients find it helpful to sleep in a recliner.

POST OPERATIVE EXERCISES (MAY START 1ST DAY AFTER SURGERY):

Elbow Range of Motion

- Take arm out of sling. With elbow bent at 90°, bend and straighten elbow as though brushing something off the front of you. Repeat 30 times, 3 times per day.

Grip Strengthening

- Make tight fist. Hold for 10 seconds. Repeat 30 times, 3 times per day.

Scapular retraction

- Stand with arms at side, elbow bent at 90 degrees.
- Pinch shoulder blades together, as if trying to get them to touch in the middle.
- Hold for 10 seconds. Repeat 30 times, 3 times per day.

Supported Arm Pendulums

*The following is to be done without using shoulder muscles but with assistance of the **non-operative** hand to make motion, described as if **Right** shoulder was operated on.

- Bend over at waist. Bend Right elbow 90° and support with **Left** hand.
- It may be easier to do this exercise while seated.
- Make small circles clockwise and counterclockwise. Repeat 30 times each way, 3 times per day.

PREVENTING BLOOD CLOTS

- Make sure you get up and walk around as much as possible; mobilizing prevents clots.
- Take the blood thinner your surgeon prescribed.
- Inform your surgeon if you have a history of stomach ulcers.

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.

EXPECTED RECOVERY:

- Start physical therapy approximately 2 weeks after surgery (at discretion of surgeon).
- Use sling for 4-6 weeks after surgery for all activities including sleeping (your surgeon will determine the length of time based on the status of the repair at the time of surgery).
- Return to school/desk type work approximately 4-5 days following surgery.
- Return to use of shoulder for typical household chores by 6-8 weeks after surgery.
- Return to heavy occupational/laborer activities or sports approximately 4-6 months.

DRIVING

- No driving while you are required to be in your sling.
- You may return to driving a vehicle (non-commercial) when you are no longer affected by pain, no longer wearing your sling, 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.