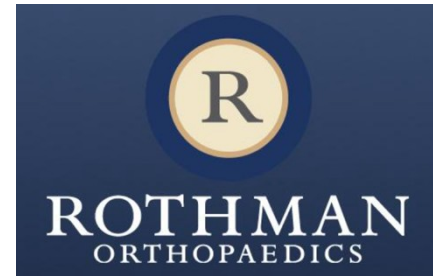Brandon J. Erickson, MD
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Sternoclavicular Joint Reconstruction Discharge Instructions

PAIN MANAGEMENT

- **INTERSCALENE NERVE BLOCK** - A combination of local anesthetics are used to numb your shoulder and arm so your brain will not receive any pain signals during and immediately after surgery. The length of effect varies from person to person, but the block usually provides 8-12 hours of pain relief. You will notice a gradual increase in pain as this begins to wear off at which time you can increase the frequency of the oral pain medications as needed.
- **ORAL PAIN MEDICATIONS**
  - Naproxen 500mg
    - Start by taking 1 tablet by mouth twice daily x 2 weeks
    - This medication is an anti-inflammatory medication.
    - You should take this medication with food.
  - Tylenol 500mg
    - This is a medication for pain.
    - Take one tablet by mouth every four hours **as needed for pain levels 1-3**
  - Tramadol 50mg
    - This is a medication for pain.
    - Take one tablet by mouth every four hours **as needed for pain levels 4-7**
  - Oxycodone 5mg
    - This is a medication for pain.
    - Take one tablet by mouth every four hours **as needed for pain levels 8-10**

SIDE EFFECTS OF THESE MEDICATIONS INCLUDE DROWSINESS AND CONSTIPATION. **YOU SHOULD NOT DRIVE OR DRINK ALCOHOL WHILE TAKING THESE PAIN MEDICATIONS.**

- **OTHER MEDICATIONS**
  - Stool Softeners
    - Post-operative constipation can result due a combination of inactivity, anesthesia, and pain medication. To help prevent this, you should increase your water and fiber intake. Physical activity such as walking will also help stimulate the bowel.
    - Colace 100mg
      - This medication is for post-operative constipation. Take this medication twice daily as needed for constipation.
  - Zofran 4mg
    - This medication is for nausea.
    - Take this medication by mouth every 8 hours as needed for nausea.
  - Pantoprazole/Omeprazole 40mg

- This medication is a proton pump inhibitor used to reduce the risk of stomach ulcers while taking a NSAID such as Naproxen.
- This medication should be taken daily by mouth for two weeks.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

- **SLING:** <u>6 WEEKS</u>
  - You will need to wear the sling at all times (during the day and at night). You may remove it to *shower*, *get dressed*, and do your *exercises/physical therapy*.   When the sling is off you may let your arm hang straight down at the side.
  - You can adjust the straps on the sling as needed for comfort. Be sure that your arm is well-supported and your forearm is parallel to the floor.
  - **We recommend that you DO NOT drive during the period of time your arm is in the sling**

- **ICE MACHINE**
  - Recommend using **1 hour on, 1 hour off for the first 2 days after surgery** *while awake*
  - Do not place pad directly on skin – make sure there is a barrier such as a t-shirt or towel
  - After the first 2 days you may use the ice machine as needed for comfort
  - If you did not receive the ice machine, you may use ice packs on the surgical area 20-30 minutes every 1-2 hours

WOUND CARE & BATHING

- **BANDAGE**
  - You have a large, bulky bandage on your shoulder that you may remove <u>**2 days**</u> after your surgery. Simply peel off all of the tape and underlying gauze.
  - After the dressing is removed, you will see that the incision is reinforced with white adhesive bandages called Steri-Strips – leave these on until your sutures are removed.
  - Cover the incision with a new bandage once daily – a large adhesive bandage or gauze and tape will be sufficient.
  - Keep the incision clean and dry – <u>do not put any alcohol, lotion, or ointment on the incision</u>.
- **BATHING**
  - You can shower once the initial dressing is removed (2 days post-op). However, the incision needs to stay dry and covered and in the shower until the sutures are removed at 7-14 days post-op. Waterproof bandages work very well for this.
  - To wash under your arm, bend forward and allow your arm to hang straight to the ground. You should not attempt to lift your arm overhead to wash under your arm.
  - Do not submerge the incision in a bath, pool, or hot tub until the sutures are removed **and** the wound is healed.
- **SUTURE REMOVAL**
  - Stitches will need to be removed in **10-14 days**. <u>Please contact our office to make an appointment for this if you have not already done so</u>.
  - We prefer that you return to our office to have your sutures removed. If you live a great distance away and are unable to do so, you may have a local physician remove your sutures.
    - If you choose to do this:
      - **You must first contact that physician to confirm that they are willing and able to do so.**
- Keep an eye on your incisions for **signs of infection**:
  - Excessive drainage that is soaking through your dressing, especially if it is pus-like

- o Redness that is spreading out from the edges of your incision
- o Fever or increased warmth around the surgical area

CONTACTING OUR OFFICE
- When to contact our office immediately:
  - o Fever > 101.5°F
  - o Excessive bleeding from incision(s)
  - o Signs of infection of incision(s)
  - o Excruciating pain for which the pain medication is not helping

PHYSICAL THERAPY
- **You will not do any formal physical therapy until six weeks post-op. You will be given an order for this at your six week post-op office visit.**
  - o Physical therapy can be done at the facility of your choice.
- You may begin the home exercises listed below **tomorrow**. You can remove your sling to perform these exercises.
  - o **ELBOW MOTION** (10-15 repetitions per set | 2 sets | 3 times daily)
    - ▪ Remove sling and allow arm to rest at your side (you may perform this sitting or standing). Allow your arm to straighten at the side, then gently bend elbow up. Position forearm with thumb facing up.

  - o **HAND AND WRIST EXERCISES** (10-15 repetitions per set | 2 sets | 3 times daily)
    - ▪ With your arm comfortably supported, gently bend wrist back and forth.
    - ▪ Curl the fingers into the palm to make a loose fist and then straighten them out.