



Matthew Gotlin, M.D.
159 East 74th Street
New York, NY 10021
Tel (212) 737-3301

Instruction Sheet following Distal Biceps Tendon Repair

Sling:

Wear your sling at all times after your surgery (this includes sleeping). There are no exceptions to this rule—it is very important. You will need to wear the sling at all times until your first post-operative visit at which time you will be transitioned to a hinged brace. This is not related to your level of pain but related to the healing process of the repair. Additionally, you should not carry anything heavier than a pencil in your hand or use your arm to squeeze or grip anything. You may move your wrist and fingers as tolerated and are encouraged to do so.

Dressing:

The post-operative splint and dressings placed on you immediately after your surgery must stay on at all times and should be kept clean, dry, and in place. You should cover it when bathing to keep it dry. Use CAUTION when showering so as not to slip and fall. Minimize use of the arm and NEVER bear weight on or lift with the arm that was operated on at any point before your first post-operative visit. Wear your sling as directed above.

Showering:

You may shower 48 hours after surgery. Please use CAUTION!! Be careful not to slip and fall. The effects of anesthesia and/or medication may make you drowsy or lightheaded. Be sure to keep your post-operative splint and dressings clean and dry. If needed, cover your splint and dressings with a waterproof bag when bathing. Be sure not to try to use or lift the arm to wash yourself.

Ice:

Apply ice for 20 minutes at a time throughout the day to minimize swelling and discomfort. You may ice over your dressings as much as desired for 20 minutes at a time with 20 minutes of rest between icing. You may repeat this cycle as much as you'd like. Know that icing still has a cooling effect even if you don't feel it through your dressings. This will minimize swelling.

**Medication:**

You will be given pain medication that should be taken as prescribed. Please note that narcotic pain medication may cause constipation. Please remember to take stool softeners (Colace) when using narcotics to help reduce the chance of constipation. You should not use alcohol together with narcotic medication. Do not drive or operate complex machinery while taking narcotic medication. Please note that most narcotic pain medications have side effects that may include nausea, vomiting, sedation, and/or dizzy spells. If you experience any of these side effects to a severe extent, you should contact our office. When your pain is well controlled (2 days to 2 weeks post-op), you may transition yourself to an anti-inflammatory and Tylenol.

You should restart all of your prescription medications once discharged unless specifically instructed otherwise.

Follow-up visit:

You need to see the doctor 10-14 days following surgery for your first post-op visit. At that time, your sutures (stitches) will be removed. You will also be given a prescription to begin physical therapy. Call the office to arrange this appointment if it hasn't already been made.

Common Concerns:

1. Bruising and/or swelling of fingers, elbow, or arm will continue to develop and may change patterns as time goes on. This is caused by bleeding of the injured tendon into the area below the skin; gravity can pull the bruising into the forearm. Do not be alarmed by this swelling and/or bruising anywhere along the arm.
2. Numbness or tingling of the forearm/fingers is a result of disruption of superficial skin nerves during the procedure, or irritation to these nerves due to swelling. Most of this will resolve over time.

Please call immediately if:

1. Any oozing or redness of the wound, fevers (>100.3 degrees F), or chills.
2. Any difficulty breathing or heaviness in the chest.

REMEMBER - these are only guidelines for what to expect following distal biceps tendon repair. If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to call the office.

