



# **Post Operative Instructions: Distal Biceps Tendon Repair**

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## **ACTIVITY**

- You **may not lift anything** with the operated arm until permitted by Dr. Gilmer.

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## **SPLINT & SLING**

- Keep the splint on at all times. We will remove this during your visit to the clinic.
- You may be provided a sling; you may remove the sling as much as you would like. It is just for your comfort.

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## **DRESSING & INCISIONS**

- A small amount of red-tinged drainage on the dressing during the first 2 days is normal.
- Keep the dressing clean and dry; protect it while bathing or showering.
- Do not apply Bacitracin or other ointments.
- Avoid soaking in pools, lakes, hot tubs, or the ocean until sutures are removed and the incision is fully healed.

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## **PAIN & INFLAMMATION**

### **Ice**

- Apply ice wrapped in a dry towel 20 minutes at a time, several times per day for the first week, then as needed.

**Swelling**- You may notice that your fingers will swell if your arm is hanging by your side for long periods of time. Keep your arm **elevated above your heart** as much as possible for the first 2 to 3 days.

### **Pain Medications**

- Take your prescribed medications as directed.

#### **Tylenol (Acetaminophen)**

- First-line for pain.
- Take 1000 mg every 6-8 hours.
- Do not exceed 1000 mg per dose or 4000 mg per day (limit to 3000 mg/day if you have liver issues).
- Do not drink alcohol while taking Tylenol.

#### **Oxycodone**

- For moderate to severe breakthrough pain only.
- Use sparingly and wean off as soon as possible.

Common side effects include:

- Nausea: Take with food.
- Drowsiness: Do not drive or operate machinery.
- Itching: Benadryl may help.
- Constipation:
  - Use stool softeners (e.g., Senna-Docusate) or OTC options (Mineral Oil, Milk of Magnesia, etc).
  - Avoid bananas, rice, apples, toast, and yogurt (may worsen constipation).

- Light walking helps stimulate bowel function.

Refills:

- If you think you will need a refill, you must request it during regular weekday office hours.

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## EMERGENCIES

You must have someone stay with you during the first 48 hours after surgery.

Call the clinic or the on-call orthopedist if:

- Drainage soaks the dressing, increases, smells foul, or if incisions become red, warm, or very painful.
- You develop a fever  $>101.5^{\circ}\text{F}$  or chills.
- You experience leg or calf pain, swelling, or difficulty breathing.

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## FOLLOW-UP CARE

- Schedule a follow-up appointment at ~2 weeks postoperatively for a wound check, suture removal, and review of your surgery (if not already scheduled).

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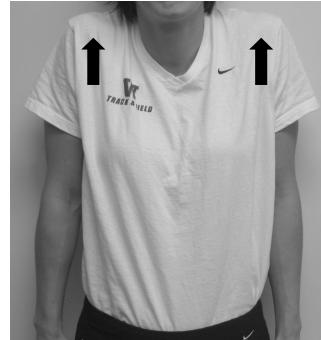
## EXERCISES

### Grip strengthening:

With the arm in the sling, grip a rubber ball, old tennis ball, or beanbag. Hold for 5 seconds and release.

#### •Shoulder Shrugs:

1. Keep your arm close to your body.
2. Shrug your shoulders upwards and hold for 5 seconds.
3. Slowly lower your shoulders
4. Repeat



#### •Shoulder Rows:

1. Keep your arm close to your body.
2. Pull your shoulders forward by rounding your back. Hold for 5 seconds.
3. Slowly unround your back and stand normally.
4. Pull your shoulders back by trying to "pinch" your shoulder blades together. Hold for 5 seconds.
5. Repeat

