

## POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS – BRACHIOPLASTY

### Narcotic

- Tylenol #3 (Acetaminophen/Codeine)      **Last dose given at:** \_\_\_\_\_AM/PM  1 tablet  2 tablets
- Percocet (Acetaminophen/Oxycodone)      May take 1-2 tablets every 4-6 hours **as needed** for pain starting at \_\_\_\_\_AM/PM
- Tramacet (Acetaminophen/Tramadol)

### General Discharge Instructions:

1. You **MUST** be accompanied home by a responsible adult who may either drive you home by car or take you back in a taxi.
2. The medication or sedation given to you will be acting in your body for the next 24 hours. Because of this, you may be sleepy, dizzy, and/or lightheaded. These feelings will wear off slowly. Therefore, you should not: stay alone, drive a car, operate machinery, power tools, drink alcohol, including beer, make important decisions or sign legal documents.
3. Eat a light diet following surgery. Avoid spicy, greasy, fried, or gaseous foods. If you experience any nausea, fluids that are clear and high in sugar are recommended (Gatorade, soda, Kool-Aid, nonacidic juices).
4. **Avoid smoking for six weeks** after surgery for better wound healing (nicotine constricts blood vessels).
5. If your surgical site is exposed to the sun **after three weeks**, apply a sunscreen SPF 45 or higher and continue to do so for at **least a year** to prevent the scar from changing to a dark color.

### Medications:

1. Be sure to eat something substantial before taking your pain medication and antibiotic, as both can be nauseating and hard on your stomach.
2. Initially, take your pain medication and antibiotic 2 hours apart. Then, if you were to become nauseated or have a reaction, you would know which medication you may not be tolerating.
3. ALL narcotic medication can cause constipation following surgery. You may buy Metamucil, Milk of Magnesia, Correctol, or Dulcolax suppositories. All are available without a prescription at the pharmacy. DO NOT allow yourself to have any problems with constipation.
4. Do not consume any drugs other than those specifically ordered for 24 Hours. If the medications or vitamins are blood thinners, please do not take them for at least 3-4 weeks after surgery unless medically necessary and approved by Dr. Brooks or your Family Doctor.
5. Finish all antibiotic medication as prescribed.

**Please note that you are impaired while taking narcotics, DO NOT drive until 6 hours after taking your last narcotic.**

- ZOFRAN** 4mg (Ondansetron) for nausea.

Take this medication today at \_\_\_\_\_AM/PM even if you are nausea-free. It is a very helpful medication to avoid nausea. If you become nauseated before this time, you may take it early. If it is not helping, you may also take Gravol 50mg every 4 hours.

- ADVIL** and **ALIEVE**- 4 days after your surgery. After that, it is safe to take it at the same time as your narcotic (Tylenol #3, Percocet, Tramacet, etc.).

- TYLENOL** may be used after your pain prescription is completed.

### Diet:

1. Resume your regular diet. You may eat as you feel able. Keep well hydrated by drinking plenty of fluids.
2. DO NOT drink alcohol or caffeinated drinks for one week after surgery.

### Activity:

1. Take it easy for the first two weeks to prevent bleeding but ensure that you walk around between rest periods to help prevent clots from forming in your legs. Wear the Garment 24 hours a day for two weeks except when showering until Dr. Brooks advises differently. **(You may remove it to shower.)**
2. Be sure to get plenty of rest to allow your body to recuperate. However, you must get up and walk around in your house at least every 2 hours during the day to prevent developing a blood clot.
3. It is best to rest in an upright position for comfort and to decrease swelling. You can either rest in a recliner or bed with 2-3 pillows behind your back and pillows under your arms.
4. Use your elbows as needed, but do not put extra stress on your shoulders. Keep a fluffy towel folded and tucked under your armpit.
5. For two weeks, do not lift anything greater than 10 pounds (i.e., a 4-liter milk jug).
6. Avoid raising your arms over shoulder level or pushing or pulling anything for the first two weeks. (You may do your hair).
7. Avoid any aerobic type of activity or strenuous exercise for 4-6 weeks.
8. You can resume sexual activity at least two weeks after surgery or when it is no longer painful.

**Wound Care :**

1. You will see **Dr. Brooks** at his office 7-8 days after your surgery for suture removal.
2. You may shower after 48 hours. Remove the garment and dressing to shower, dry the area by patting with a clean towel or air dry. After each shower, place a very thin layer of Polysporin on the incision, reapply the dressing and garment.
3. Make sure you have a caregiver with you during this time.
4. There will be bloody drainage on the dressings. This is normal.
5. If bleeding occurs, hold constant and firm pressure for 10 mins with a clean towel. If bleeding continues and cannot be stopped, seek emergency care, and contact **Dr. Brooks** to inform him.
6. DO NOT use a bathtub, hot tub, swimming pool, pond, or lake for four weeks.
7. You may begin scar massage at three weeks (only if there are no open areas in the incision). Use firm pressure and cream (vitamin A, E, or Aloe are all excellent choices), and push against the direction of the scar (perpendicular).
8. **Dr. Brook's** office has a high-quality Vitamin and silicone scar gel. However, there are many over-the-counter products available at the pharmacy.

**Return to Work:**

You can return to work within a week if you have a job that does not involve heavy lifting.

**EMERGENCY INFORMATION**

***If any of the below symptoms occur, please call our office, or go to your local emergency department:***

**Infection:** Redness increasing in size, increasing pain (worsens each day), foul discharge/puss, fever, or chills.

**Blood Clot:** Sudden shortness of breath, chest pain, pain in your calf or leg (can have swelling and/or redness).

**Bleeding:** One surgical site doubles or triples the size of the other and becomes firm and painful, or bleeding at incision that soaks your dressing in 1 hour or less.

**Contact Information:** If something urgent arises (infection, blood clot, excessive bleeding, or uncontrolled pain), you can contact our office at **403-487-0460** (M-F 9 am to 4 pm). **After office hours**, please present to your **nearest emergency department or call 811**. After-hours **emergency healthcare providers** may contact the emergency department at Medicine Hat Regional Hospital at 403-529-8053 to be connected to Dr. Brooks. **Please bring this form with you.**

***We must inform the College of Physicians and Surgeons of any patient hospitalized within ten days after having surgery in an outpatient surgery facility. If this happens to you, please let us know at 403-487-0460.***

**Follow-up Appointment: 7 Days** after your surgery, Dr. Brooks will want to see you again. Please book your appointment the day after your surgery to ensure you see him within the 7-day time frame. You can contact our office at **403-487-0460** (M-F 9 am to 4 pm).

**Caregiver Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Witness Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE: CAREGIVER RESPONSIBILITIES:** As a caregiver, you are responsible for being with the patient for 24 hours from the time they are discharged from the recovery room.