Postoperative Instructions for Distal Biceps Tendon Repair
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Dressings
- Keep your dressings clean and dry.
- Remove your dressings 3 days after surgery. You may leave the white tape strips (steri-strips) in place if they are present. Cover your incision with a dry dressing (gauze and medical tape) and change this dressing daily. These dressing can be purchased at any local pharmacy.

Shower
- You may shower immediately after your surgery provided that you keep your dressings and wound DRY. Wrap the extremity with 2 plastic bags and seal the top with duct tape. Alternatively, you may use waterproof dressings (e.g. Tegaderm) which can be found at any local pharmacy.
- After 2 weeks, you may get your incision wet and no longer need to use a plastic bag for shower.
- You are not allowed to submerge your wound in a bath under any circumstance for a minimum of 3 weeks after your surgery.

Diet
- Start with clear liquids, then advance your diet as tolerated.

Medications
- A narcotic pain medication has been prescribed to ease your postoperative pain. Please pick this prescription up at the pharmacy. Instructions on how to take this medication will be printed on the bottle.
- If you were taking a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medication prior to surgery, do NOT resume this medication until 1 week after your surgery.

Activity
- Elevate and ice your surgical site (up to 15 to 20 minutes per hour).
- Use your sling for comfort only.
- You may have active and passive range of motion of your elbow as tolerated.
- No lifting anything with your operative arm until 3 months postoperatively.
- You are not allowed to drive if you are taking narcotics. Because there are so many factors involved with driving after surgery (type of surgery, amount of pain, etc), I allow patients to return to driving on a case by case basis. We will discuss this more at your first postoperative visit.
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Things to Look Out For
- Some spotting of your dressings for the first few days after surgery is to be expected.
- However, if there is any excessive drainage, redness of your incision, or you have a temperature >101.5 degrees, please call my office at 925.295.4130. After hours, you may call the on-call orthopedic surgeon or go to the ER/Minor Injury Clinic.

Follow Up
- In most cases, my surgery scheduler has already made an appointment for you to see me after your surgery.
- If you do not have an appointment, please call my office at 925.295.4130 and make an appointment to see me 10 to 14 days after your surgery.

Rehabilitation
- **Phase I (0 to 12 weeks postoperatively)**
  - Gentle active and passive range of motion of your elbow as tolerated
  - No forced passive motion
  - No lifting anything with your operative arm until 12 weeks postoperatively

- **Phase II (12 weeks to 24 weeks postoperatively)**
  - Start gentle elbow flexion and supination resistive exercises

- **Phase III (starting 24 weeks postoperatively)**
  - May return to activity/sports as tolerated