MEDICATION

- One of three pain medications, Norco (hydrocodone), Ultram, or Tylenol #3 will be prescribed to you. Take as instructed and as needed.
  - Pain medication may cause constipation. You may take an over the counter stool softener (Colace, Senekot, etc) to help prevent this problem.
  - You should take these medicines with food as they can cause nausea.
  - You may not drive or operate heavy equipment while on narcotics.
- If you have a nerve block, begin taking the pain medication as you feel your sensation returning to prevent a sudden onset of extreme pain (typically 10-12 hours after your surgery). **DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE BLOCK COMPLETELY WEARS OFF.**
  - Most patients find it helpful to take two pills 10-12 hours after surgery and another two, four hours later to help transition to oral pain medications.
  - The first 48 hours are typically the worst for pain and gradually improves.
- **DO NOT** take any medication with Advil or ibuprofen for two weeks after surgery as this may impair tissue healing.
- **Resume all home medications unless otherwise instructed.**
- Call the office, (404) 255-5595, immediately if you are having an adverse reaction to the medicine.

WOUND CARE

- You may remove surgical dressings on the second day after surgery unless otherwise instructed (surgery Wednesday, remove Friday; Friday surgery, remove Sunday). Do not remove steri-strips (tape pieces). If steri-strips fall off, cover incisions with band-aids.
- The incisions may not get wet until after your first post-operative visit. Place a large garbage bag over your shoulder to shower or take a sponge bath while your dressings are on.
- You may remove the sling to shower but let your arm dangle to the side. Do not use your muscles to move the shoulder unless instructed otherwise.
- After your dressings have been removed, you may cover with plastic wrap or continue to use the bag to shower. To access your armpit, lean forward slightly to let your arm dangle away from your side.
• NO submersion of wounds (bath, hot tub, pool) is allowed for a minimum of 2-3 weeks after surgery.

ACTIVITY
• You may use your arm according to comfort level for activities below shoulder height (writing, computer, video games, eating, etc.)
• The involved arm may be taken out of the sling three times a day to bend and straighten your elbow unless otherwise instructed.
• You may move the hand and wrist as tolerated (minimum 3 times a day).
• Depending on your surgery, certain restrictions may apply which will be addressed in therapy and at your first visit.

SLING
• Remain in sling at all times, except when dressing, showering or exercising the arm, unless otherwise instructed.

SLEEP
• Nighttime will probably be the most uncomfortable time.
• Sleeping in a reclined chair or propped up on a pile of pillows may aid in sleeping. Placing a pillow behind the elbow to prevent it from sagging may also be of benefit.
• Sleep in your sling until instructed otherwise.

COLD THERAPY
• Ice or cryo-cuff (if covered by insurance) should be used for comfort and swelling constantly for the first 24 hours. NEVER apply directly to exposed skin.
• After the first day, use 15-20 minutes every 2-3 hours.
• Always use after physical therapy to help with swelling and pain.

EMERGENCIES
• If you have an emergency contact Dr. Nicholson’s office at (404) 255-5595 and he will be contacted.
• Contact the office if you notice any of the following:
  o Uncontrolled nausea or vomiting, reaction to medication, inability to urinate, fever greater than 101.5 (low grade fever 1-2 days after surgery is normal), severe pain not relieved by pain medication, redness or continued drainage around incisions (a small amount is normal).
• If you are having chest pain or difficulty breathing, call 911 or go to the closest emergency room.

FOLLOW UP APPOINTMENT
• Please make your first post-op visit 5-7 after surgery if not done so already.
• If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call the office.