Good Posture Habits Before and After Breast Surgery or Radiation

Good posture is important to prevent tight muscles, pain, loss of strength and stress on your joints. Using good posture throughout your daily activities can protect your joints and muscles from too much strain. Practicing good posture habits before surgery or radiation will make it easier to continue with these habits after surgery or treatment.

If you have muscle pain, tenderness or tightness after your surgery, you may develop a movement pattern that is known as “protective posturing.” This posture causes you to lean your head slightly forward, raise and hunch your shoulders, bend your elbows and lean forward at the waist. This protective posturing may cause muscles to shorten and tighten which may overtime cause pain in the arm, chest, neck, back and even the knees.

Changes can also occur with radiation. Radiation treatments may stiffen and shorten the chest (pectoral) muscles which can cause tissue to become scarred and thicken. These changes may not occur right away, but may continue to happen months after radiation.

Tips

- When you have pain, check your posture. Discomfort is often caused by bad posture.
- Use a mirror to see how your body looks and note what adjustments you need to make for good posture.
- Avoid staying in any one position for long periods.
If you are having problems with your posture, talk to your doctor. The James has a special clinic for patients to help with their physical recovery. For more information about the Oncology Rehabilitation Clinic, please call (614) 293-0043. Physical therapy may be covered your insurance plan. Every plan is different, so you should check with your insurance company before your appointment.