

Post Operative Instructions for Shoulder Surgery
Oregon Medical Group Orthopedic and Sports Medicine Clinic

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Call our office if you have any of the following:

- Fever over 101 degrees.
- Excessive bloody wound drainage, yellow, green or foul smelling drainage
- A large red area around the incisions. Some redness and swelling is normal.
- Severe shoulder pain that doesn't respond to pain medication.
- Numbness in your arm. If you had a nerve block, you can expect some numbness in your shoulder and arm for the first day after surgery.
- You suspect an allergic reaction to medications or dressing materials. This could be shortness of breath, a rash or redness, hives, etc.
- Significant tenderness, swelling or heat in your calf

Dressings/Bandages:

- Your dressing applied in the operating room should remain on, dry, and intact for 3 days following surgery. You may take a bath, keeping your shoulder out of the water to keep it dry.
- After 3 days, take off the dressing. You may need to apply band-aids to protect the wounds. Keep the incision area dry until you are seen in our office.
- When your doctor approves, you may shower and let water run over your incisions. Do not soak the area in a bath or swimming pool until the wounds have completely healed, usually in 14-21 days.
- Leave sutures or steri-strips in place until you see the doctor.
- If you have a little bleeding on the dressing, reinforce it with a clean towel, gauze or bandage materials. **If you have increased bleeding that soaks the dressing, call our office immediately.**

Medication:

- Take your regular medications as prescribed.
- You have been given a prescription for pain medication. Please take according to the instructions. If your pain becomes too severe, don't try to "tough it out". Call our office if you have severe pain that doesn't respond to pain medication.
- **Some pain medications contain Tylenol. DO NOT take additional Tylenol without discussing with your surgeon. This can lead to liver failure.**
- **Do not drive or drink alcohol while you are on narcotic pain medication.**
- Sometimes pain medication causes nausea. If this is severe and doesn't go away, call our office.

- Pain medication can cause constipation. Drink plenty of water and/or fruit juice. Take milk of magnesia if you become constipated, or use a stool softener such as Dulcolax. If you don't have a bowel movement in 72 hours, call our office.
- If you had a nerve block, your shoulder may remain numb for 12-24 hours.

Diet:

- Resume your regular diet. Drink plenty of fluids, but stay away from alcoholic and caffeinated fluids. Try to stay away from smoking.

Your Post-op Appointment:

- Should be scheduled for 10-14 days after surgery. Call 541-242-4812 if you don't have a post-op appointment date and time.
- Your sutures will be taken out at this visit.

Activity:

- Minimize activity on the day of surgery. Don't make important decisions or sign legal documents. You should be in the care of a responsible adult for the first 1-2 days.
- Apply ice for 20-30 minutes at a time, every hour during the first 72 hours after surgery. Then apply ice 2-3 times/day to help minimize pain and swelling. If using a cryo-cuff, use as directed. Protect your skin by using a thin towel between the ice and your skin. **Do not apply heat.**
- **Wear your sling or abduction pillow as provided at all times, including while you sleep.**
- **Do not actively lift your elbow away from your body** or externally rotate your arm (turn palm up and out away from your body) unless otherwise instructed by your doctor or therapist. This is very important, **lifting your arm too early may cause the surgery to fail.**
- You may be given passive exercises to do after surgery. Please refer to those instructions, if provided.
- You are encouraged to bend your wrist, elbow and fingers frequently and as soon as possible after surgery.
- DO NOT resume sports, use exercise equipment, or do physical activities until your doctor tells you its okay.
- **No lifting.**
- Sleeping may be difficult for a few weeks after surgery. You may find it more comfortable to sleep sitting up on pillows or in a reclining chair. Propping a pillow under the shoulder may help improve your comfort as well.
- Don't drive until we have seen you for your post-op appointment, as it might be difficult to control the vehicle.
- Physical Therapy will typically start 5-10 days after surgery. Do only those activities allowed by your surgeon or therapist.

Special Instructions:
