

# The Shoulder Center Postoperative Instructions

## Vivek Agrawal, MD

- **DIET**
  - For the first day or two after surgery, make sure you are getting enough fluids. Two parts water mixed one part with a sport drink-like Gatorade works well.
  - You may gradually resume your normal diet as tolerated.
  
- **PAIN**
  - Take the prescribed pain medication for the first two to 3 days after surgery on a regularly scheduled basis.
  - After this time, your pain should improve significantly allowing you to take the pain medicine on an "as needed" basis.
  - Nausea can also be a common side effect with narcotic medications. In addition to taking the medicine with food, many patients find that over-the-counter Benadryl 25-mg one tablet every 4 hours as needed taken 15 to 20 minutes before taking your narcotic pain medicine can help manage the nausea.
  - Pain can also mean that you are doing too much too soon. Your repair needs time to heal before you can use your arm normally.
  - Rest and relax your arm. The exercise program we recommended will help you relax, improve your pain, and speed your recovery.
  - An ice or cold pack for the first 24 to 48 hours after surgery can also be beneficial. Do not apply an ice pack to exposed skin. Many patients find a bag of frozen peas or corn makes an excellent ice pack.
  - You will be more comfortable sleeping in a reclining position than lying flat. A reclining chair or thick pillows are advised.
  
- **DRESSING**
  - Arthroscopy: On the day following surgery, you may remove your dressing and shower.
  - Open Surgery: You may remove your dressing and shower four days following surgery. Leave the small white Steri-Strips over your incision intact.

Remove the immobilizer when you are showering. Remove the whole dressing before you shower. Do not scrub or soak your incision(s). Do not put any creams, ointments, etc. on the wound. After you are finished showering, put either Band-Aids or gauze pads from the drugstore on your cuts depending on their size. You may lean forward and wash under your arm. When you lean forward, your arm should dangle freely. You can do the same for using deodorant, or putting on a shirt.

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- **ACTIVITY**

- Please follow the special exercise program we recommended for you. You should start this the day following your surgery.
- You can bend and straighten your elbow, squeeze a ball, or other such device to help reduce swelling and pain.

### **Danger signs: Call the office if you notice any of the following!**

- If your pain is getting worse rather than improving. You start to require more pain medication rather than less. This could mean there is a problem, but it also may be due to your being too active at home. Before you call, get off your feet; put some ice on your shoulder. Take a pain pill. Give it a few hours. Review your exercise program to relax your arm. If you do not feel any better and are concerned you should **call!**
- If you start having fevers over 101.5 as measured by a thermometer. This too could mean there is a problem. **Call!!**
- If your incision is looking red and angry with pus-like drainage, then this could mean an **infection** and you should **call!!**
- If you notice rashes, itching, or hives then you may be having an **allergic reaction** to a medication. **Call!!**
- If you are having difficulty breathing, chest pain, or another urgent/emergent problem. **Call 911!!!**

Your health is our first priority! Therefore, if you have questions or things are unclear, **please call!!**



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