

Shoulder Arthroscopy: Discharge Care Instructions

Recovering at Home

This care sheet gives you a general idea about how to care for your shoulder at home. These recommendations are designed to help your recovery process, but each person may recover at a different pace. Follow the steps below to get better as quickly as possible.

Wound Care

- **Keep your surgical dressing on until first post-operative visit.** We will remove your dressing. Please do not cut any visible sutures or remove the white adhesive skin tapes (steri-strips or butterfly strips) over the wound.
 - After dressing is removed, if wound is continuously draining please call your doctor.
 - After you remove your bandages, you may apply Band-Aids to the wounds daily for comfort. Please **do not use any ointments** under the bandage.
- **Keep the incisions clean and dry until your first post-operative visit. Do NOT soak the shoulder in water or go swimming** until cleared by your doctor. You may shower on post-operative Day 2 with your bandages covered (see Activities of Daily Living below).

Pain Management

- Medications
 - We suggest you use the pain medication the first night prior to going to bed. This is to ease any pain when the nerve block wears off.
 - You should eat something when you take pain medication to avoid an upset stomach. Only take narcotics as prescribed as needed. Plan to gradually reduce your narcotic use over the coming weeks.
 - Your doctor may prescribe or recommend non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medication (Aleve, Motrin, etc...). Use these as directed.
 - Pain medication may make you constipated. Please try the following solutions in this order. If these do not work, please call the physician's office.
 - A. Decrease the amount of pain medication if your pain has improved.
 - B. Drink more decaffeinated fluids, including water.
 - C. Walk as much as tolerated.
 - D. Eat foods high in fiber (fruit, prunes, etc...).
 - E. Take stool softeners as prescribed while taking narcotic pain medication.
- Ice Therapy - Use the ice machine or ice packs (with a thin towel between skin and ice pack) continuously on post-operative Day 0 and Day 1. Beginning on Day 2, you may use ice for 20 minutes every hour for pain relief.
- Sling – Wear your sling at all times until post-operative Day 2. You may begin weaning out of your sling on post-operative Day 2, and use it as needed for comfort.

Activities of Daily Living

- **Diet**
 - Return to your normal diet.
- **Bathing**
 - You may shower on post-operative Day 2 with your bandages covered.
 - You may shower without bandages on post-operative Day 5. Keep incisions dry until post-operative day 14. You should remove the sling while showering. Gently pat the wound area dry with a clean towel.
- **Exercise**
 - Please perform the exercises on the attached “Home Exercise Program,” by post-operative Day 2. Do these exercises 2 to 3 times daily. Do not push into sharp pain during any exercise, but gradually try to stretch farther each day.
- **Lifting**
 - Do not lift items heavier than 1 pound until your first post-operative appointment (approximately Day 10-14). Limit your lifting to light items, such as a phone, glass, or remote control.
- **Driving**
 - You may resume driving once you are no longer taking narcotic pain medication and you no longer need your sling for comfort.
- **Work/School**
 - You may return to desk work or school within the first week after surgery. Any activity level high than the above must be cleared by your physician.

Physician Follow-Up

- Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety.
- Your Physician will discuss your surgery, show photographs of your surgery, and outline your rehabilitation at your first follow-up appointment.
- Be sure to make and go to all appointments listed on your discharge paperwork. Call your health care team if you are having problems. It’s also a good idea to bring a list of the medicines you take to each visit.

When should you call for help?

Call your doctor now if you experience any of the following:

- Fever over 100.4°F (38°C) or chills
- Redness or drainage from the surgical incision site after post-operative Day 2

Call 911 anytime you think you may need emergency care. For example, call if:

- You passed out (lost consciousness).
- You have severe trouble breathing.
- You have sudden chest pain and shortness of breath, or you cough up blood.

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- You do not have a bowel movement within 2 days after taking a laxative.
- You do not get better as expected.