



SHOULDER ARTHROSCOPY POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS AND EXPECTATIONS

PAIN

It is normal to have swelling and discomfort in the shoulder for several days or a week after surgery. If you had a nerve block, the local anesthetic may keep your shoulder numb for several hours.

- Apply ice bags or use the cryocuff or similar cold unit you were given to control swelling. Ice should be applied 20-30 minutes at a time, every one to two hours. To protect your skin, put a thin towel or T-shirt next to your skin if using a plastic bag. Icing is most important in the first 48 hours, although many people find continuing it lessens their postoperative pain.
- You will be given a prescription for powerful pain medication when you are discharged from the hospital. If you find you do not tolerate it well, call our office and we will try a different medication. It is a good idea to take an over the counter stool softener (ie. Colace or Senekot) to prevent constipation from the narcotic pain medications.
- Many patients find that lying down accentuates their discomfort. You might sleep better in a recliner or propped up in bed. A pillow placed behind your elbow may also help.

MOVEMENT

Pump your hand and move your wrist and elbow to keep the blood flowing and prevent stiffness. You will be given specific directions about movement when you are discharged.

- If you had an arthroscopic reconstructive procedure, such as a rotator cuff repair, instability repair, labral repair, or biceps tenodesis, your arm will be in a sling for FOUR to SIX weeks. You can remove the sling to go in the shower after 2 days, however keep your arm at your side and do NOT use it actively. Other than showering, wear your sling AT ALL TIMES. Do not move your arm out to the side. You can type at a computer with your arm at your side and can bend your elbow to feed yourself.
- If you had a simple shoulder arthroscopy, like an acromioplasty or AC joint resection you can remove your sling the morning after surgery and raise your arm to shoulder level.

SURGICAL SITE

Keep the postoperative dressing clean and dry. Unless it becomes wet or too tight because of swelling, leave the bandages in place for at least two days. TWO days after your surgery, remove your bandages. If you have a pain Buster or Pain Pump, please remove it two days after surgery. This simply involves pulling it out. There should be almost no resistance to doing so. You can then dispose of it along with your dressing and cover all incisions with Band-Aids to keep from snagging the sutures on clothes. Please call the office immediately if you have difficulty removing the pain catheter. Leave the steri-strips in place, they will fall off on their own.

SHOWERING

You may shower after you remove the postoperative dressing, but keep the incisions dry with a waterproof dressing for the first 7-14 days. Keep your arm by your side and do not use it actively. Do not wet the incisions directly (bathing or swimming) until at least 2 weeks postop.

FOLLOW-UP

Ryan W. Simovitch, M.D.
Palm Beach Orthopaedic Institute, PA



If you have not already done so, please call our office to make an appointment for 7-10 days after surgery for your first post-operative visit. The sutures will be removed at this visit.

PHYSICAL THERAPY

After surgery, we will prescribe a physical therapy program appropriate for your shoulder. It often helps to call before surgery to make an appointment with your Physical Therapist.

OTHER

- Be in the care of a responsible adult.
- Abstain from drinking alcoholic beverages and from smoking. You may eat a regular diet. Drink plenty of non-alcoholic, non-caffeinated fluids.
- Do not make important decisions or sign legal documents.
- Sometimes your shoulder remains painful and swollen for several weeks, depending on the problem you have and the amount of surgery that was done. This is usually nothing to worry about, but call Dr. Simovitch's medical assistant, Leslie Lee (561)694-7776, ext 4131 if you have excessive symptoms, especially fever (after the first day or two), redness, or draining from the shoulder, and/ or numbness, tingling, or discoloration of the arm or hand. Please call if any other problems arise as well.