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Post-Operative Instructions: Shoulder Arthroscopy

Activity

- Rest the day of surgery.
- Wear your sling at all times, including sleeping. However, you may take it out for pendulum exercises, wrist, hand and elbow range of motion, and showering. At first, you may feel more comfortable sleeping in a seated position rather than laying flat.
- If you have obtained an ice machine/cryo-cuff, please discuss the instructions for use with the representative. You may also choose to use an ice pack to control pain and swelling. If so, do not put it directly on the skin. Apply for 20 minutes, three times a day.
- Remove your arm from the sling 3-5 times a day and let your arm hang at your side and perform the exercises enclosed as tolerated (see pgs 3-4).
- You may return to work when cleared by Dr. Alaia to do so. Lifting heavy weight is strictly prohibited unless allowed by the surgeon.
- Do not drive until cleared by Dr. Alaia to do so.

Pain Medication

- Pain is common post-operatively for several weeks.
- Your narcotic pain medication prescribed for you should be started immediately after your surgery. You may take 1-2 tablets every four hours as needed for pain.
- Take your pain medication *regularly* for the first 2-3 days after surgery (even if your pain is mild) in order to avoid rebound pain. Then, wean yourself to an “as needed” dosing regimen.
- Constipation is a common side effect from narcotic pain medication. Over the counter Miralax (Polyethylene Glycol) can alleviate this symptom.
- If you have any side effects from a medication we have prescribed, discontinue its use and call our office.
- Do not drink alcoholic beverages while taking narcotic pain medications.

Physical Therapy

- You will begin physical therapy at a time dictated by the physician, depending on the type of procedures that were performed.

Showering/Dressings/Incisions

- You may remove the bandages and shower on post-operative day three.
- ***Do NOT*** scrub the surgical incisions. Use soap on your neck and let the soapy water run down onto the shoulder.
- Try your best to keep your forearm against your stomach while you shower.
- ***Do not bathe for the first 3-4 weeks*** unless directed to do so by the physician.
- When done showering, pat the incisions dry with a towel and again, do not scrub. You may then apply band-aids. At this point you do not need to reapply the gauze pads.
- Your stitches will be removed at the first follow-up, typically between 7 and 10 days from the procedure.

Follow-up

- Please call the office to arrange the follow-up visit. You should be seen between 7 and 10 days from the initial surgery unless otherwise instructed by Dr. Alaia.
- Call the office if you develop any of the following:
 - Fever > 101.0 degrees Fahrenheit
 - If the skin around the incisions becomes very red or develops a discharge
 - If you develop difficulty breathing or chest pain, report to your local emergency room.

