

Shoulder Replacement Discharge Instructions

Medications

- Most patients will require some narcotic pain medication for a short period of time, which can be taken as per the directions on the bottle.
 - DO NOT drive a car or operate machinery while taking narcotic medication
- Primary Medication = Norco (Hydrocodone)
 - Take 1 – 2 tablets every 4 – 6 hours as needed
 - Max of 12 pills per day
 - Plan on using it for 2 to 5 days, depending on level of pain
 - Do NOT take additional Tylenol (Acetaminophen) while taking Norco or Vicodin
- Common side effects of pain medication are nausea, drowsiness, and constipation.
 - To decrease the side effects, take medication with food.
 - If constipation occurs, consider taking an over-the-counter laxative such as prune juice, Senekot, Colace (or Pericolase), or Miralax.
 - If you are having problems with nausea and vomiting, please take the prescribed Zofran. If this continues then contact the office to possibly have your medication changed
- Ibuprofen 600-800mg (i.e., Advil) may be taken in between the narcotic pain medication to help smooth out the postoperative “peaks and valleys”, reduce overall amount of pain medication required, and increase the time intervals between narcotic pain medication usage. Do not take Ibuprofen if you have been advised by your doctor that you are not safe to do so (i.e. with stomach issues, kidney disease, or on blood thinning medications)
- Blood Clot Prevention: Please take 81 mg aspirin daily for 2 weeks after your surgery to help prevent DVT's (this is a very rare complication)

Shoulder Sling/Immobilizer

- You have been provided a shoulder sling/immobilizer that is to be worn AT ALL TIMES for the first 2 weeks with the following exceptions:
 - You ARE permitted to remove your sling/immobilizer to shower.
 - You ARE permitted to remove your sling to perform the shoulder stretching exercises as instructed by the therapist in the hospital.
 - You ARE permitted to remove the sling/immobilizer or release the strap/s to allow your elbow to straighten at your side 3-4 times a day for 5-10 minutes at a time. Start this the day after surgery
- You DO need to wear your sling/immobilizer at night to sleep.

Dressing/Incision Care

- You will have a clear plastic (Tegaderm) waterproof dressing over your incision/s.
- Your sutures are buried under the skin and will not need to be removed – they are absorbable.
- Do NOT remove the dressing until follow-up.
- You may shower with the waterproof dressing as early as two days after surgery.
- Bruising of the chest, shoulder, and entire arm is extremely common after surgery.

Ice

- Icing is very important for the first 14 days after surgery. For the first 5 days after surgery, a bag of ice or an ice machine should be used as frequently as possible. Make sure to remove the ice for 15-20 minutes every hour. After 5 days, ice should be applied for 20-25 minutes 4-5 times per day or as much as tolerated.
- Care must be taken to avoid frostbite – always have a washcloth or layer of clothing between the ice and the skin.

Diet

- Resume a regular diet as soon as possible.

Activity

- Increase your general activity level as the effects of the anesthetic medications have worn off and your strength improves.
- Remain in your shoulder sling/immobilizer as instructed above. This includes sleeping in your sling/immobilizer.
- Place a pillow behind the elbow when resting either reclined or flat, this generally helps with shoulder pain.
- Do not actively (on your own) lift your operative arm away from the side of the body or reach behind your back until cleared by your physician.
- You are not permitted to lift or bear any weight with the operative arm until cleared by your surgeon.
- Ok to do pendulum exercises very gently. Do not lift anything with your operative arm.
- You may begin elbow, wrist, and hand range of motion on the first post-operative day about 2-3 times per day
- These exercises should be performed 3 times per day as instructed by the therapist.

Follow Up

- Generally, a follow-up appointment has been made for you at the time of surgery. Your appointment is typically scheduled between 10 and 14 days after surgery.

Post-operative Problems

- Call if you have any of the following:
 - Persistent fever over 101.5 degrees.
 - Excessive blood on your dressing.
 - Numbness or tingling in your arm or hand that was not present before surgery and has lasted more than 48 hours.
 - Drainage from any incision that last longer than 5 days following surgery.
- Call (909) 862-1191 x32594 with questions during business hours or send a message using MyChart. After hours please call the after hours nurse line 1-909-793-3311 TTY 711

Physical Therapy

- Physical therapy needs to be scheduled to start 2 weeks after surgery unless your surgeon instructs you otherwise.