



**WORCESTER COUNTY**  
ORTHOPEDICS

## **WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER ARTHROSCOPIC SHOULDER SURGERY**

- It is normal to have swelling & discomfort in the shoulder for several days to a week after surgery.
- **Apply ice bags to control swelling.** Ice should be applied 30 minutes at a time, every hour or two; put a thin towel or T-shirt next to your skin if using ice in a plastic bag. Icing is most important in the first 48 hours, although many people find that continuing it weeks after surgery lessens their postoperative pain.
- If you had a nerve block, the local anesthetic may keep your shoulder numb through the evening of your surgery. You will be given a prescription for pain medication when you are discharged from the hospital. If you find you do not tolerate it well, please call our office.
- If you had a rotator cuff repair **do not take any NSAID's** (Motrin, Advil, Ibuprofen, Alleve, Naprosyn, etc.) You may take Tylenol as directed on the package as long as your pain medication does not contain Tylenol or Acetaminophen.
- Many patients find that lying down accentuates their discomfort. You might sleep better in a recliner, or propped up with pillows in bed. A pillow placed behind your elbow may also help.
- Keep the post-op 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.** Cover your incisions with Band-Aids to keep the sutures from snagging. You may shower then, but try to keep the incisions dry by applying a watertight dressing for the first 7 days. **Do not wet your incisions directly** (bathing or swimming) until after your first post-op visit.
- PT will be prescribed on a case-by-case basis. Should it be part of our immediate post-op treatment plan, you will be instructed accordingly with prescription and PT protocol.
- We would like to see you back in the office approximately 10-14 days after surgery. If you don't have your first post-op visit scheduled, please call our office to make one. Should you have superficial sutures, they will be removed at the first post-op visit.
- If you experience continuous incisional drainage, redness, swelling, or fever please call our office.
- You may eat a regular diet, if not nauseated. Avoid alcoholic/caffeinated fluids & smoking.
- Plan to take a few days off from work.
- Duration of sling use will vary dependent upon the nature of your surgery. You are to wear it at all times, with the exception of changing of clothing, bathing and during Physical Therapy. You also may remove your sling to do shoulder pendulums and to move your hand, wrist and elbow with your elbow at your side immediately.

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