



Postoperative Instructions
Shoulder Arthroscopy with Rotator Cuff Tear
Matthew Stover D.O.

1. After arthroscopy the wound is covered with gauze or tape. These should generally be left in place for 48 hours. Due to the large amount of fluid used during the arthroscopy, it is normal to see some bloody drainage on the dressings. If bright red blood persists despite elevation and icing, please call the doctor. The dressing should be removed and wounds covered with Band-Aids on the second day after surgery. Do not remove the paper strips over the incision or cut any visible suture. Wounds should be kept dry for 48 hours. Showering is allowed after 48 hours. Unless otherwise instructed, after 48 hours, the wound may be exposed in the shower without scrubbing the area. The wound should not be submerged in a bathtub or pool until the sutures are removed.
2. Patients are generally more comfortable sleeping in a reclining chair or with pillows propped behind the shoulder. Some difficulty with sleeping is common for 2-3 weeks after surgery.
3. Icing is very important for the first 5-7 days postoperative. While the post-op dressing is in place, icing should be continuous. Once the dressing is removed on the first or second day, ice is applied for 20-minute periods 3-4 times per day. Care must be taken with icing to avoid frostbite to the skin.
4. You will have a shoulder immobilizer on after surgery. Unless otherwise instructed you are to stay in the immobilizer for most of the day including sleeping. You may come out of your immobilizer to work on pendulum exercises (see end of instructions) and to move the elbow to help prevent stiffness. Otherwise, keep your shoulder still.
5. The anesthetic drugs used during your surgery may cause nausea for the first 24 hours. If nausea is encountered, drink only clear liquids (i.e. Sprite or 7-up). The only solids should be dry crackers or toast. If nausea and vomiting become severe or the patient shows sign of dehydration (lack of urination) please call the doctor or the hospital. A low-grade fever (100.5) is not uncommon in the first 24 hours but unusual beyond. Please call the doctor with any temperature over 101.0 degrees. Should severe calf pain occur or significant swelling of calf and ankle, please call the doctor.
6. Local anesthetics (i.e. Novocaine) are put into the joint during surgery. It is not uncommon for patients to encounter more pain on the first or second day after surgery. This is the time when swelling peaks. Using the pain medication as directed will help control pain with little risk of complication. Taking pain medication before bedtime will assist in sleeping. It is important not to drink or drive while taking narcotic medication. If you were prescribed narcotic medication

(i.e. Lortab, Percocet) you can supplement those medications with 200 mg or 400 mg of ibuprofen every 4-6 hours. You should resume your normal medications for other conditions the day after surgery. We have no specific diet restrictions after surgery but extensive use of narcotics can lead to constipation. High fiber diet, lots of fluids, and muscle activity can prevent this occurrence.

7. Bruising and swelling down into the elbow, hand, and chest wall is not uncommon. Sleeping is usually aided by placing a pillow behind the operated shoulder.
8. The doctor will need to reexamine you 10-14 days after shoulder surgery. Please call the office to schedule a follow-up appointment.
9. If unexpected problems occur and you need to speak to the doctor, call the office. Dr. Stover's office number is (304) 414-2120. The answering service will answer after business hours.

Pendulum Exercises

Bend at the waist so your arm is dangling down. You may want to hold onto a table or chair for support. Gently rock your body weight from your left to your right foot or in a circular motion to move your arm in circular pattern. Reverse your movement so your arm moves in the opposite direction.

