



INOVA[®]

Sports Medicine

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Post-Operative Instructions Following Shoulder Surgery

1. When do I come in for my first post-operative visit?

If an appointment has not already been scheduled, please call the office the day following surgery to schedule an appointment for approximately 10-14 days after your surgery.

2. What should I expect after surgery?

After surgery, it is normal to experience some discomfort. You should have received a prescription from the nursing staff at the hospital. Please fill the prescription and use the medication regularly as directed for the first forty-eight hours and then as needed after the second day. For minor discomfort, Tylenol may be used **instead** of the prescription medication. If you are able, you may also take NSAIDs (ie. Advil, Motrin, Aleve, Ibuprofen, etc.) **with** your prescribed medication.

A low-grade temperature (99-101 degrees F) is common. Please call the office at (703) 970-6424 if your temperature is consistently elevated over 101.5 degrees.

Eat a bland diet for the first day after surgery. Progress your diet as tolerated. Constipation may occur with narcotic usage. You can try taking Colace or Miralax over the counter as directed. Please contact our office if you continue to experience constipation.

Please call our office at (703) 970-6424 immediately if you experience excessive bleeding or pus like drainage at the incision site, uncontrollable pain not relieved by the pain medication, excess swelling or redness at the incision site, a fever above 101.5° not controlled with Tylenol or Motrin, shortness of breath or any foul odor or blistering from the incision site.

3. What should I do if I have any paperwork I need filled out?

If you have any type of Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) or any other type of paperwork, you will need to either fax them to (571) 472-0452 or bring them to clinic. Please be advised that it takes 7-10 business days for all paperwork to be completed.

4. What effects might I notice from the anesthesia?

If you had general anesthesia, some fatigue and lethargy may be noticeable for a day or two. Occasionally, nausea may occur. Eating light foods will help. Resume your regular diet as the nausea resolves.

If you had a block as well, soreness in the area of injection is common. Ice to this area is helpful in reducing discomfort. Apply it for 15-30 minutes three times a day. The soreness should resolve by three to four days following the surgery. If, by that time, it has not resolved or it is getting worse, please call our office or call the hospital and ask for the anesthesia office.

5. What can I do to help reduce swelling and discomfort?

Limiting your activities and resting with your shoulder elevated above your heart (i.e. sitting upright) are the best methods of reducing swelling and discomfort and will speed up your recovery. You may have a cool therapy device. If this is the case, the company's representative should have provided you with instructions on its proper use. If not, please call their office for assistance. If you cannot reach them, please call our office. Ice may also be used. Fill a plastic bag with ice cubes and place it over the shoulder with a towel between the skin and the ice bag. Leave the ice in place for 15-30 minutes. This may be done every hour while awake.

Sleeping on your back with the head of your bed raised to ≥ 30 degrees or sleeping on the non-operative side will reduce discomfort at night. You may also want to take pain medication before going to sleep.

With regard to your activity level, use common sense as your guide. Advance in your daily activities as tolerated. Painful activities are to be avoided. Limit shoulder activities to those suggested by me or your therapist.

6. Will I have an exercise program to follow?

Remove your sling three times a day and perform pendulum exercises, beginning the day after surgery. These are performed by leaning over, bending your waist approximately 90 degrees and resting your non-operative arm on a table to support your body. Your operative arm should hang toward the ground. Allow your arm on the operative side to rotate in a clockwise fashion producing small circles with your hand. Perform this for approximately 10 circles and then repeat in a counterclockwise fashion. Let gravity do most of the work. This is a simple motion designed to reduce stiffness. It should not be performed too fast or with large arcs of motion.

You have been given a physical therapy prescription and my protocol. If you have not already scheduled physical therapy, please call and schedule an appointment as soon as possible. Physical therapy is an essential component to your recovery from surgery. Your physical therapy will start in 2 days after surgery. You may begin therapy prior to your initial follow-up appointment with me. If you have any difficulty arranging the therapy, call my office for assistance.

7. How long should I keep my shoulder dry and dressings in place?

The bandage should be kept dry and in place for 48 hours. Remove and discard your dressing on the 2nd day. It is normal to see some blood on your dressings. It is also normal for you to see apparent bruising on your skin around your shoulder when you remove the dressing. If present, leave the steri-strip tape across your incision(s). If you are concerned about the drainage or the appearance of your shoulder, please contact our office.

At this point the stitches may get wet in the shower. Following your shower, pat the stitches dry and place Band-Aids over them. Do not immerse your shoulder in water (i.e. swimming, baths, or hot tubs) for the first 4 weeks after surgery.