



## SHOULDER ARTHROSCOPY POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

GREGORY LOREN, MD, FAAOS

- Dressings:** You can remove the dressings the day after surgery. Leave the Steri-Strips™ in place.
- Bathing:** The incisions are to remain dry. Showering is acceptable after 24 hours. Wrap around the area with Saran Wrap® or using water proof dressings (such as NexCare®) over the incision sites to prevent water leakage.
- Bleeding:** In some cases, oozing at the incisions persists for several hours. Contact our office if drainage persists.
- Swelling:** Postoperative swelling about the shoulder and arm is common and may cause temporary stiffness and discomfort lasting up to several weeks. To minimize the swelling, cold compresses or ice may be applied for 20 minutes each hour for the first 48-72 hours and subsequently 3-4 times daily, as needed. The skin should be carefully protected. Commercially available cryotherapy units are available for purchase, but insurance coverage varies.
- Pain Relief:** For moderate pain, prescription medication will be provided. Cold compresses often aid substantially in relieving pain. Pain medication should not be taken on an empty stomach or with alcohol. Driving is not advised until pain medication is discontinued.
- Diet:** After surgery, fluids and soft nutritious foods are preferred with the gradual progression to a regular diet. Adequate nutrition is essential for the healing process.
- Nausea:** Although unusual, nausea may be experienced. Any tendency for this should be discussed with the anesthesiologist. Otherwise, postoperative nausea is generally relieved with a clear liquid diet and time.
- Drowsiness:** After anesthesia, drowsiness may persist for quite a while but should cause no undue concern. Driving is prohibited until this resolves.
- Activity:** The sling fit in the operating suite may be loosened at allow movement at the elbow and wrist several times a day while at rest to minimize stiffness and swelling. Grip exercises using a soft ball or sponge may be performed continually through the day in the sling. At no time should the arm leave the side of the body until instructed. The arm is to remain in the sling otherwise at all times, including sleep, except when bathing or dressing.
- Postop Visit:** If your surgery scheduler has not set up a postoperative appointment for you, please call the office to schedule. The postoperative course is tailored to each individual's specific injury. Virtually every patient's experience with arthroscopic surgery differs.
- Q:** How long does the surgery take?  
**A:** Surgery time may vary depending on the procedure. Time could range from 1 to 3 hours.
- Q:** Will my family be able to visit immediately after surgery?  
**A:** Unfortunately, no. The average stay in the first stage recovery area is about 1 hour.

**If additional questions or concerns arise, please do not hesitate to contact us at (760) 943-6700.**