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## Post-op Shoulder Instructions

The following is an outline of instructions and information for post-operative shoulder surgery. Follow these instructions and if you have any questions, contact Dr. Gudeman or his staff. These instructions pertain to most shoulder procedures. Occasionally your specific procedure may require slightly different instructions. If that is the case, Dr. Gudeman or his staff will inform you.

### Pain, Swelling, Nausea and Low-grade Fever

It is completely normal to experience some post-operative pain and discomfort. The severity of the pain depends on the extent of the surgery and your individual pain tolerance.

1. The anesthesiologist performed a nerve block to numb your shoulder and arm. Therefore, it is normal to experience some numbness and tingling in your arm and fingers. Some very mild shortness of breath or facial/lip numbness can occur due to the block, but it is uncommon and temporary. If you experience severe shortness of breath, contact the office or go to the ER. The block typically lasts between 10 to 18 hours. If a pain pump is used, the nerve block will last until the fluid in the pain ball is empty. Typically the catheter and pump are removed 2-3 days after surgery. After the block wears off, an increase in pain can be expected. Do not wait for the block to completely wear off before starting your oral pain medication. The pain may increase over the course of 2-5 days after surgery.
2. It is not uncommon to have some mild temperature elevations after surgery (less than 101 degrees) due to incomplete lung expansion. To help resolve this, take 10 deep breaths and forcefully exhale every hour while awake for the first 3 days after surgery.
3. The pain medications prescribed may cause itching or nausea. Do not take them on an empty stomach. Benadryl may help decrease the itching. If you experience any significant nausea or vomiting, you may take the anti-nausea medication prescribed by Dr. Gudeman.
4. It is normal to experience a fair amount of swelling in your shoulder immediately after surgery. It may take up to 3-4 days for the swelling to decrease. If swelling is noted in the hand, keep your hand elevated to the side and forward, especially for the first 24 to 48 hours.

### Ice

Use the cold wrap provided and place over your shoulder during the first 7 to 10 days (usually 20 to 30 minutes on an 20 to 30 minutes off). Do this as often as possible but at least every 2 hours while awake for the first 3-4 days. Do not place the ice pack directly on the skin, always have the cover on.

### Dressing Care

It is normal for the dressing to have some bloody seepage after surgery. This does not represent ongoing bleeding. Do not attempt to change the dressing yourself. This will be changed in the office during the first post-op visit following surgery. If the blood seems excessive or seeps continuously, please call the office.

Do not attempt to remove the steri-strips or sutures on your own. These will be removed during one of the early post-op visits.

## Bathing

Keep your dressing clean and dry. Do not get the post-op dressing wet. You may shower if you adequately cover the surgery site with cling wrap or plastic bag. Do not submerge the surgical site while bathing and/or in a pool. If you have a pain ball, you may **not** shower until it is discontinued.

## Activity

Except during physical therapy, home exercises and hygiene, UltraSling or regular sling should be worn constantly until further instructed by Dr. Gudeman or his staff. These instructions are usually given during your post-op visits. UltraSling or regular sling should be worn while sleeping. Formal physical therapy after surgery will be started per Dr. Gudeman's instructions. *Post-operative exercises: See sheet included in the material given by Dr. Gudeman.*

## Driving

You may drive after you are off narcotics, can react to an emergency driving situation appropriately, and have full control of your extremity. This can be as long as 1-4 weeks.

## Medications

1. Dr. Gudeman usually prescribes pain and anti-nausea medication after surgery. The prescriptions will be given to the family by Dr. Gudeman immediately after surgery and recommended usage will be explained. Please follow the instructions on the medication bottle. Any changes in those instructions will be discussed by Dr. Gudeman or his staff.
2. Pain medications/narcotics can be habit-forming and therefore life-threatening. It will be important to wean off narcotics as soon as possible after surgery.
3. **Begin taking baby aspirin (81mg) once a day by mouth for 4 weeks** (unless there is a reason why you cannot take aspirin, such as an allergy to aspirin or stomach/kidney problems that aspirin may make worse). Taking aspirin also may reduce your need for post-op medicine and may decrease the chance of developing blood clots (DVT, deep venous thrombosis) in your extremities.

## Warnings

Immediately call Dr. Gudeman/his staff at **317.884.5161** if any of the other following occur:

- Excessive bleeding
- Excessive non-bloody wound drainage beyond the first 3-4 days
- Poor pain control
- Fever over 101 degrees Fahrenheit after post-operative day 3
- Increased redness along incision
- Severe shortness of breath
- Any other urgent concerns/questions

For urgent questions after office hours, you may still contact the office at **317.884.5161**. Your call will be transferred to our answering service, which will contact the on-call physician assistant.

For emergencies or if there are any delays after calling the answering service or office about an emergency situation, going to a local hospital emergency room is recommended. If you cannot get to an emergency department for emergency issue, call 911.