
Shoulder Arthroscopy Patient Discharge Instructions

The following is an outline of instructions and information for post-operative shoulder arthroscopy. Follow these instructions specifically and if you have any questions, contact Dr. Bales.

The Arthroscopic Procedure Done on Your Shoulder Today

1. eg. Rotator Cuff Repair and Subacromial Decompression
2. _____
3. _____

Pain and Swelling

It is completely normal to experience some postoperative pain and discomfort. The severity of the pain depends on the extent of the surgery and your individual pain tolerance. Several steps have been taken to decrease early postoperative pain.

1. The anesthesiologist may have given you a nerve block (an injection in your neck), to numb your shoulder and arm. This is to help control your pain. Therefore, it is normal to experience some numbness and tingling in your arm and fingers up to approximately 18 hours after surgery. The block typically lasts between 10 to 18 hours so do not wait for the block to completely wear off before starting your pain medication.
2. If you still feel pain, you may take oral pain medication supplements as prescribed for you by Dr. Bales. As stated before, do not wait for the block to wear off before you start taking your pain medication.
3. It is normal to experience a fair amount of swelling in your shoulder immediately after surgery. We fill your shoulder with fluid during surgery in order to perform the arthroscopy. It may take up to three to four days for the fluid to be reabsorbed by your body. It is also normal to see bruising and swelling down your arm from the effects of the surgical procedure.
4. You may experience a mild sore throat from the anesthesia, nausea and possibly a low-grade fever (less than 101.5 degrees Fahrenheit).

Ice

You may place a bag of ice or use the ice packs provided and place over your shoulder for the first 7 to 10 days (usually 30 minutes on and 20 minutes off). Do this as often as possible but at least every two hours for the first three to four days. Do not place the ice bag or cooling device directly on the skin.

Dressing Care

Keep your dressing clean and dry. There may be some bloody spotting on the dressing initially, this is normal. Excessive bleeding that soaks the dressing must be reported to Dr. Bales. You may remove the dressing days after surgery and apply bandages over the steri strips. **Do not place ointments such as Neosporin, etc. onto wounds.**

Bathing

You must keep your dressing clean and dry. You may sponge bathe until the first dressing change.

Showering is okay on the third day after surgery. **No** baths, hot tub, pools etc. for three weeks after surgery. It is all right to gently hang the arm out to the side of your body in order to wash under your armpit.

Activity

- Ultrasling: Should be worn at all times until further instructed by Dr. Bales (typically will be worn full time for four to six weeks). This includes using it while sleeping. Formal physical therapy after surgery will be started per Dr. Bales' instructions.
- Sling: Wear sling for comfort purposes. It is ok to come out of the sling to do motion exercises of the shoulder.
- Post-operative Exercises: These should be performed for all procedures.
 1. Pendulum Exercises: Take the sling off. Bend forward at the waist so your arm hangs down and make small, gentle circular motions with the arm as tolerated; 30 times clockwise and counter-clockwise, three times per day.
 2. Hand, wrist and elbow range of motion exercises should be started the first day after surgery to prevent stiffness.

Sleeping

Most patients find sleeping in a reclining chair is more comfortable until they are out of the sling. Place a pillow behind the elbow while lying down or sleeping.

Diet

Clear liquids and advance as tolerated.

Driving

No driving is allowed while the shoulder immobilizer/sling is in place or until cleared by Dr. Bales. You must be off all narcotic pain medications before driving.

Medications

- Pain:
- Norco - 7.5/325, one to two every four to six hours as needed
 - Percocet - 7.5/325, one to two every four to six hours as needed
 - Ibuprophen (Advil) - 200 mg, three tablets three to four times per day as needed
 - Diclofenac - 75 mg, one with breakfast and dinner for 14 days

Nausea: Phenergan - 25 mg, every six to eight hours as needed

Warnings

Notify Dr. Bales immediately if any of the following occur:

- Excessive bleeding
- Excessive non-bloody wound drainage beyond the first three to four days
- Poor pain control
- Fever greater than 101.5 degrees Fahrenheit after post-operative day three
- Increased redness along incision
- Calf pain or swelling

Follow-up with Dr. Bales

As scheduled _____ day(s) _____ week(s)

Please call **317.268.3601** to schedule your post-op appointment if not already scheduled or if you have any questions or concerns. After 5 p.m. or on the weekend, call **866.404.5070** to contact the on call doctor.