
Shoulder Post-operative Instructions

1. You will have some form of dressing placed on your shoulder after surgery. Blood-tinged drainage may seep through dressings. You may reinforce with additional wrap and add 4x4 sterile gauze pads under the wrap for the first 48 hours after surgery.
2. **After 48 hours, you may remove the bulky outer dressing, but you must leave the white steri-strips (these look like tape) in place.** At this time, you should cover the incisions with Band-Aids. Keep your incisions covered until you return to clinic by replacing the Band-Aids as needed if they become soiled or fall off.
3. You may bathe by wrapping your shoulder with plastic wrap or a clean, large garbage bag. Keep the extremity dry. If the steri-strips become wet, blot them dry.
4. You will experience pain after surgery. Therefore, do not hesitate to use the pain medications prescribed to you by Dr. Lavery. If pain is out of proportion to that which is normally expected, or you experience increased swelling or increased discomfort when moving your fingers, please contact our office.
5. To minimize pain and speed recovery, swelling must be minimized. It is not uncommon to have a moderate increase in swelling and pain two to five days after surgery. **You can decrease this swelling by removing your arm sling and performing gentle elbow and wrist range of motion exercises.** A soft squeeze ball is usually provided with your arm sling. Please gently squeeze this ball throughout the day as the muscular contractions will help reduce swelling in your hand and arm. Please call if the pain and swelling are progressively increasing.
6. An ice bag (or cryocuff, if provided) applied to the shoulder for 20 minutes every hour is an excellent way to control pain and swelling. If you were given a cryocuff, use it at all times for at least four days, as instructed. If you remove the cryocuff, before re-applying, always fully deflate it, and then re-apply straps with firm pressure. Re-inflate with cooled water, the jug should be elevated approximately 20 inches above the shoulder (you may need help). Re-cool water every hour while awake.
Remove the cryocuff at night.
7. It is not uncommon to have mild temperature elevations after surgery due to incomplete lung expansion. To resolve this, take 10 deep breaths and forcefully exhale every hour while awake for the first three days after surgery. You may take Tylenol to improve comfort during these temperature elevations. If your temperature is greater than 102 degrees or if you have a progressive increase in swelling, pain or redness, contact the office.
8. You may drive an automatic transmission vehicle when you have minimal pain, you have full control of the extremity **and** you are off narcotic pain medications. For most shoulder surgeries, we recommend waiting until you are seen for your first post-operative visit in clinic.
9. If pain or other problems require a hospital Emergency Department assessment, please go to Community Hospital South as OrthoIndy privileges and interactions are limited at other hospitals. The address is 1402 East County Line Road South. The phone number is **317.887.7000**.