

Shoulder Discharge Instructions

Mark H. Getelman, M.D.

Dressings: Your surgical dressing will be applied while in surgery; this should stay in place for 48 hours. After 48 hours you may remove the dressing. There will be lots of loose pieces of gauze that can be removed. Under the gauze you will see the steri-strips (butterfly bandages) in a star formation over each incision. Your stitch closing your incision is incorporated into the steri-strips and should be left alone until your post operative appointment. You may cover the steri-strips with large bandaids until then. This visit is usually 7 to 10 days post op.

Showering: Showers are acceptable after 48 hours, no use of bathtubs or Jacuzzi. After removing the dressing covering the shoulder keep the steri-strips in place, apply a clear plastic wrap (Saran wrap or press and seal). This should be applied for each shower until the sutures are removed. You need to keep your incisions dry. After showering, make sure that you dry the shoulder area. Your sutures are usually removed at your first post operative appointment.

Swelling: Swelling is common to experience especially around the shoulder joint. This may cause stiffness and discomfort. This may last for several weeks after surgery. To minimize the swelling, utilize the cold therapy unit supplied to you at the time of surgery or ice packs. The cold therapy should be used as often as possible, especially for the first 48 hours. Run the cold therapy unit/place ice packs for 2 hours on then 1 hour off, except while asleep, regularly the FIRST 48 hours. After 48 hours, run the cold therapy unit/place ice packs for 30 minutes on and 30 minutes off as much as possible until your post operative appointment. Make sure to protect your skin by placing a towel between the pad/ice pack and your skin once the bandages have been removed.

Sling/Brace: You have been provided with a sling, this must remain on at all times, including sleeping. You may squeeze the ball that comes with the sling to help decrease the swelling in your hand. The sling can only be taken off to shower and then must be put back on.

Exercises: Squeezing the red ball that is on your Ultra sling will be helpful to alleviate swelling and stiffness of the wrist and fingers. You are advised not to drive until you are allowed out of the sling. We do not recommend driving with the sling on.

Pain Medication: You will be prescribed pain medication to be used at home after your surgery. This is a narcotic pain reliever. Take 1-2 tablets every 4-6 hours as needed for pain. Keep in mind that the medication will cause drowsiness and should not be used with alcohol. Also, taking this medication on an empty stomach may result in nausea. It is common to feel discomfort when lying down to sleep at night, so you may find it beneficial to take the pain pill at bedtime. Sleeping in a reclined position may help as well. If unusual side effects occur, please discontinue the medication and contact our

office. When additional refills are needed, please contact our office or the pharmacy during regular business hours. For mild pain, use medication such as Tylenol. Take 1-2 tablets every 4 to 6 hours as needed for pain. Do not take more than 8 tablets in a 24-hour period.

Aspirin use: If you are over the age of 35 or are a female of any age taking birth control pills, you are instructed to take an 81 mg baby Aspirin daily after surgery for 2 weeks post op. This is done to help prevent the formation of a blood clot.

Signs of Infection: With any surgery it is important to be aware of signs of infection, which can include: unusual looking incision such as increased redness or smell, drainage to be green or yellow, and increased fever. It is normal to have a slight temperature post operative, but above 101.5 degrees; you should contact our office.

Post Op Appointment: We will make your first post op appointment at your pre-op appointment; if a post op appointment was not scheduled for you 7 to 10 days after your surgery then please contact our office by calling ext 6468 or 6426. Please make the scheduler is aware that this is your first post op appointment. At this appointment, we will take the sutures out, change the steri-strips, take x-rays if needed, and go over your exercises.

Physical Therapy: This usually will start anywhere from 3 to 6 weeks post operative. We will communicate with you when you should start and will give you a prescription for the physical therapy.

Recording of your surgery: Your surgery is recorded and narrated by Dr. Getelman. You will receive a copy at your post operative visit.

Anesthesia: Our anesthesiologist should contact you the night before surgery. They will discuss the medications used to put you to sleep, remind you not to eat or drink anything after midnight the night before surgery and they will discuss with you the nerve block. If you are a candidate, you will receive an injection in the upper shoulder which will numb your arm for 12-24 hours to help with pain control.

Please feel free to contact our office at any time if you have any questions or concerns.

(818) 901-6600 ext 6468 – Marisa Lester
(818) 901-6600 ext 6426 – Elizabeth Brown