

## Surgery Instructions– Shoulder

## After Surgery

**\*\*\* All instructions & protocols can be found on my website \*\*\***

<http://www.patrickmcgahanmd.com/physical-therapy-pdfs.html>

- Post-operative Appointment
  - If you have not already made one, call my office to schedule your first appointment 1-2 weeks after surgery
  
- Pain Control
  - Pain medication will be given at your pre-operative appointment or given upon hospital discharge
  - Narcotics are used as needed
  - Anti-inflammatories may be started directly after surgery, may be taken regularly, and may continue for 6 weeks after surgery
  - For medication refills or changes,
    - For refills of medications, call your pharmacy or my office during office hours
    - For changes to medications, call my office during office hours
    - On-call physicians can NOT prescribe for patients they have not seen
  - Ice the shoulder 20 minutes per hour for the first 72 hours while awake
    - Be very careful when applying cold directly to the skin in limiting how much time it is used to avoid cold burns
    - If a cold therapy unit has been supplied, it is for home **and hospital use**.
    - After the first 72 hours, ice the shoulder at least 3 times a day and especially after physical therapy sessions
    - It will work through the dressings
  
- Swelling & Tingling
  - It is normal to have some mild swelling, tingling, or numbness after surgery
  - Taking the arm out of the sling and resting it on a pillow can help, if necessary. If it becomes progressively worse or painful, please contact the office or go to the emergency department.
  
- Dressings
  - Dressings can be left in place until your post-operative appointment.
  - There may be drainage for the first 48 – 72 hours from the incisions. This is normal
  - You may take a shower immediately but do NOT get the dressings wet
    - Once the dressings are removed, you can use gentle water on the wounds
    - Do NOT take a bath or swim as the incisions should not be soaked in water for 4 weeks post-op
    - Keep the incisions clean and dry for the first 14 days

- Physical Therapy
  - Physical therapy usually begins 1-2 weeks after surgery
  - If you have not already been given an appointment for physical therapy after surgery, please contact my office for a referral
    - My office will supply you with a prescription for your therapist
    - My physical therapy protocol can be downloaded from my website or we can defer to your therapist's protocol

A sling will be placed on your arm at the hospital or surgery center

  - Do NOT use your arm
  - Do NOT take off the sling except to do therapy, shower, or change clothes
    - Therapy may have you take off sling occasionally if swelling occurs
  - Do NOT lift your arm or use it to carry anything
  - Do NOT move the arm out from your side to write or use a mouse
  - Do NOT guard the arm and keep the arm relaxed at your side
  
- What to Expect
  - Standard Total Shoulder Arthroplasty (TSA) or Reverse Total Shoulder Arthroplasty (RTSA)
    - Immobilized in a sling for 6 weeks
    - Sling can be removed 1-2 times per day to stretch your elbow but NOT your shoulder
    - Physical Therapy is prescribed as needed. Many patients do not need formal physical therapy. For the first 6 weeks, I will teach you how to do simple range-of-motion exercises. This includes pendulums, table slides, and assisted elevation while laying flat on your back. These should be done for 5 minutes, 3 times/day.
    - Absolutely no external rotation past neutral or active internal rotation for the first 6 weeks to allow your subscapularis to heal.
    - Take your sling off to do your exercises but wear it at all other times
    - Remove the sling by the 6th week
    - Begin strengthening exercises by 12th week. Still NO heavy lifting
    - Return to full sports and activities by 6-9 months depending on progress. Full recovery may take up to 1 year.
    - Ok to use a computer or do simple tasks with your sling on and elbow at your side
  
- **Anticoagulation: Blood Clot and Pulmonary Embolism Prevention**
  - In the hospital, you will have SCD's on your leg to aid in blood flow.
  - In the hospital and at home, you should walk as much as possible to prevent blood clots from forming.
  - Based on your medical condition and the procedure performed, you may receive either aspirin or lovenox for 10 to 35 days to prevent blood clots. Healthy patients do not need blood thinners after shoulder replacement surgery.
  
- **Lifetime Infection Prevention**
  - Prior to any dental procedure, surgery, or other invasive procedure such as endoscopy/colonoscopy, the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgery recommends that you take 2 grams of Keflex or 600 mg of Clindamycin 1 hour prior to the procedure. I will provide you with a prescription.