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Shoulder and Elbow Specialist

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Shoulder Surgery Post-op Instructions – Generic Arthroscopy Instructions

Medications

- Take pain medication as prescribed.
 - Try to taper the use of your narcotic pills as soon as you feel comfortable. You may take Extra Strength Tylenol or Tylenol only in place of the pain pills. Do not take additional Tylenol if you are taking Percocet, Norco, or Vicodin.
 - You have been given a prescription for a stool softener, Colace. This medication is routinely used as pain medicines can be very constipating. Please take as directed unless you experience loose stools or diarrhea.
 - Take Aspirin 81 mg twice daily (unless instructed otherwise) to prevent blood clots.
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Diet

- Resume a regular diet as soon as possible. It is advisable to start with clear liquids until nausea is gone.
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Sling

- Use the sling until your next office visit.
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Activity

- Increase your general activity level as the effects of the anesthetic medications have worn off and your strength improves.
 - Remain in your shoulder sling or brace as instructed.
 - Remove the sling 3-4 times per day to allow gentle elbow motion as tolerated beginning the day after surgery.
 - Place a pillow behind the elbow when resting either reclined or flat, this generally helps with shoulder pain.
 - You should remain in your sling at all times until you follow up with your physician. You may remove the sling when you shower.
 - Active motion: Do not actively (on your own) lift your operative arm away from the side of the body or reach behind your back until cleared by your physician. This is vitally important to protect your surgical repair.
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Dressing Care

- Remove the shoulder dressing on postoperative day#5. If there are white strips over your incisions, do not removed these. If you had a pain catheter placed in your neck prior to surgery, remove both the catheter on postoperative day #3.

- You may begin to shower upon dressing removal and quickly pat the wounds dry. Leave the incisions open to air. Simply allow the water to wash over the site and then pat dry. Do not rub the incisions. Make sure your axilla (armpit) is completely dry after showering.
 - Slight wound drainage is common. If noted, please cover with small bandages (Band-Aids) until the drainage stops.
 - Bruising of the shoulder and the upper arm are common after surgery, even arthroscopic surgery. This can be significant. Do not worry, this is normal.
 - Ice is very important after shoulder surgery and should be used continuously over the dressing for the first 3 days. Following dressing removal, use the ice 3 times per day for 15 minutes, especially before nighttime. You may use either ice packs, icing systems or a large frozen bag of vegetables that can be broken up and molded to the shoulder and reused.
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Follow Up

- Generally, a follow up appointment has been made for you at the time of surgery. You can call the scheduling center to confirm your appointment (313) 887-6000. Notify our office if you have any of the following:
 - * Fever over 101.5 degrees.
 - * Excessive blood on your dressing.
 - * Numbness or tingling in your arm or hand that was not present before surgery and has lasted more than 24 hours after the regional block has worn off.
 - * Drainage from any incision that last longer than 5 days following surgery.
- We prefer you call us directly rather than go to your local hospital or clinic. We will be happy to answer any questions or concerns you may have. Please call (313) 887-6000. If it is after hours, weekends, or holidays, please call the Beaumont Taylor Hospital at (313) 295-5000 or the Beaumont Taylor Orthopedic Unit at (313) 375-7200.