What to expect after Arthroscopic Shoulder Surgery

- **What is normal:**
  - Swelling and discomfort in the shoulder for several days to a week after surgery.
  - Mild black-and-blue marks around your incisions; sometimes they develop after a few days.
  - Nausea and itching with narcotic medications; for mild itching you can take Benadryl.
  - Mild constipation because of narcotics; Colace or Senokot often helps.

- **When to call:**
  - Difficulty breathing or chest pain.
  - Persistent vomiting or rash after narcotic pain medications.
  - Continuous drainage from the incisions, redness, swelling, or fever of more than 100.5.

- **What to do:**
  - Many patients find that lying down accentuates their discomfort. You might sleep better in a recliner, or propped up with pillows in bed. A pillow placed behind your elbow may also help.
  - Use the ice bags or cryotherapy device to control swelling and pain. Use 30 minutes at a time, every hour or two. Put a thin towel or T-shirt between the ice and your skin. Icing is most important in the first 72 hours, but there is no downside to using it longer.
  - Duration of sling use will vary dependent upon the nature of your surgery. You are to wear it at all times, with the exception of changing of clothing, bathing and during Physical Therapy.
  - If you had a rotator cuff repair we recommend avoiding anti-inflammatories for 6 weeks.
  - Keep the post-op dressing clean and dry. Unless it becomes wet or too tight because of swelling, leave the bandages in place for at least three days, then replace them with Band-Aids. You may shower after four days, but do not bathe or use the hot-tub for at least 2 weeks.

- **Narcotic pain medications:**
  - You will be given a prescription for pain meds when you are discharged from the hospital. If you find you do not tolerate it well (nausea or itching), call our office.
  - Call the office for a refill several days before you run out of pain meds. It cannot be called in to your pharmacy and mailing a new prescription will take 2 to 3 business days.
  - Narcotics will not be refilled by the on-call physician after hours or on weekends.

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