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## **Post-Operative Instructions For Shoulder Surgery**

**SLING/IMMOBILIZER:** Your arm has been placed in a sling. This will support the shoulder and arm, and keep your arm at your side. As long as you are wearing this, your shoulder is well protected. It is safe for you to free your hand from the sling and rotate your arm as long as you keep your elbow at your side. You may bend your elbow to reach toward your face, e.g. to brush your teeth, use a fork, etc. but you should avoid reaching higher than this until instructed.

DO NOT try to use your own muscles to move your elbow away from your side until instructed. Please sleep with the sling on. Many patients are more comfortable when sleeping on their back if they prop a pillow behind their elbow to keep their arm from sagging backwards. To wash your armpit, you may lean slightly forward and let your arm dangle slightly away from your side and wash with a washcloth.

**WOUND CARE:** Some patients go home on the day of surgery while others stay overnight. If you went home on the day of your surgery, change your dressing approximately 48 hours post-operatively. There will be a large amount of moist gauze under the tape that may have some bloody drainage on it. This is expected and should not worry you. Simply cover with Waterproof Band-Aids to keep your clothes from rubbing on the incisions.

If you went home the day after your surgery, your bandages may have been changed for you. You can change it as above should the new gauze become damp or dirty.

**PLEASE MAKE EVERY ATTEMPT TO KEEP YOUR INCISIONS DRY FOR ONE WEEK POST-OPERATIVELY.** This is to prevent water from carrying skin bacteria into incisions and causing an infection. Waterproof Band-Aids will help in this regard.

If you experience a fever above 38.5 C (101 F), any redness or pus-like discharge around the incision, please contact our office immediately or present yourself to the Emergency Department.

**MEDICATIONS:** Most patients are discharged with a pain medication such as Tylenol #3 and an anti-inflammatory medication, which may be taken in combination with each other. Oral pain medication takes about half an hour to start working, so be sure to take it prior to the pain becoming severe. The most common side effect of pain medication is stomach upset. The medication can cause drowsiness and so you should avoid driving and operating heavy machinery. Narcotic medications will be refilled for no longer than one month after surgery. If further pain medications are needed, you must contact your family physician.

**FOLLOW UP:** Call my office to arrange an appointment as instructed. On your first post-op visit we will go over your surgical results and monitor progression of rehabilitation.