

Raleigh Hand to Shoulder Center

Postoperative Instructions after Shoulder Surgery



- Do not remove the sling until your follow up appointment.
- Remove the sling a few times a day to straighten and bend the elbow to prevent stiffness.
- Work on wrist and finger range of motion within the sling by making a full fist and extending the fingers and bending the wrist back and forth as much as tolerated.
- Keep the dressing on until your follow up appointment.
- You may remove your dressing in 3 days. Place a Band Aid over the stitches to keep them clean and covered.
- Keep the incisions clean and dry until the stitches are removed. For bathing, I recommend placing a towel over the incisions/dressing and doing a sponge bath and washing your hair in the sink.
- No lifting, pushing or pulling with the operative arm until cleared by your physician.

If you received a nerve block for anesthesia, the arm will remain anesthetic (numb) and unable to voluntarily move for approximately 12-72, sometimes longer. A prescription for **pain medicine was given. Start taking as soon as your arm starts to wake up from the block anesthesia.**

You may use ice as needed to help with swelling in the shoulder. Place an ice pack wrapped in a towel on the shoulder for twenty minutes at a time to help with swelling. If you have a lot of swelling, a good ice regimen is to use ice for 20 minutes and off for 20 minutes for the first three days after surgery. Do not put ice directly on the skin, as this can cause frost bite.

Call the office number if you have severe pain, severe swelling, bleeding, vomiting, fever greater than 101° F, excessive wound drainage or other concerns. Also call if your fingers become numb (can't feel a safety pin after the anesthetic has worn off), pale or discolored. Some bruising or reddish discoloration is usually normal. After normal business hours (4:30 on weekdays) the call will be forwarded to the cellphone of the surgeon on call for the Raleigh Hand to Shoulder Center. **Remember that prescription narcotic pain medication cannot be refilled after office hours.**

Thank you for allowing our practice to treat you. Wishing you a rapid recovery.