



## Scott Kaar, MD

Department of Orthopaedic Surgery  
Sports Medicine and Shoulder Service

### POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR SHOULDER SURGERY

#### A. Day of Surgery:

**Diet:** Begin with liquids and light foods (jello, soup, etc) Progress to your normal diet if you are not nauseated.

**Medication:** Hydrocodone \_\_\_\_\_ Ketorolac \_\_\_\_\_ Other(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
Strong pain medication has been prescribed. Use as directed. Do not combine with alcohol. Be careful as you walk, or climb stairs.

**Ice:** Keep an ice pack on your shoulder for 30 minutes at a time (or use Polar Care machine if given) at least 4-5 times per day. Icing will assist with pain and swelling control

**Sling:** Wear your sling: at all times (including when sleeping) or for 1 day, then only for comfort. It will be helpful to sleep propped up with pillows and with a pillow supporting your elbow.

#### B. First and Second Post-Operative Day:

**Medication:** Continue to take pain medication as needed every 4-6 hours.

**Ice:** Continue to ice your shoulder 30 minutes at a time 4-5 times per day.

**Bandage:** Leave bandage on the shoulder. Keep dry. The bandage may be slightly bloody or wet from the incision. This is normal.

**Sling:** Use sling as noted above. Remove it when doing exercises below.

**Exercises:** You can begin elbow and wrist flexion and extension: You can temporarily remove the sling and bend and straighten your elbow 10 times while keeping the palm of your hand facing your body. Then bend and straighten your wrist 10 times. Hand flexion and extension exercises: Open and close fingers completely 10 times.

•Do each of these 3 times a day.

#### C. Third Post-Operative Day Until Return Visit:

**Medication:** Continue to take pain medication as needed every 4-6 hours.

**Ice:** Continue as on post-op days 1 and 2.

**Bandage:** You may remove surgical bandage on post-operative day #3. Leave steri-strips (paper tapes) in position if present. DO NOT put any ointments or bacitracin on incisions. You can shower after removing dressing if wounds are dry on post-operative day \_\_\_\_\_. Cover wounds with plastic wrap and secure with tape when showering. If wounds get wet, gently pat the area dry. You may remove sling when showering, but keep arm in front of your body and DO NOT use arm when showering. If needed per instructions, place sling back on after showering. DO NOT soak your shoulder in water or go swimming in a pool or standing water.

**Exercises:** Continue exercises described above plus any others prescribed by your physical therapist.

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**Appointment:** You should make a follow-up appointment for approx 14 days from surgery. Please call the office the following business day after surgery if you do not have an appointment already scheduled.

**Physical Therapy:** To begin in 2 to 3 days please call to schedule the appointment if you do not have one already set up. Physical therapy prescription is given to you on your last visit or with your discharge documents.

**Driving:** No driving until you are completely off the pain medications, at full weight bearing and not using crutches. This will be assessed on one of your future clinic visits after surgery.

**Shoulder Response to Surgery:** Your shoulder will be swollen. It may take a few weeks or longer for it to resolve. It is also common to notice bruising around the shoulder and upper arm as the swelling resolves. If excessive bleeding at the incision occurs, please notify our office.

**Concerns or questions:**

**Duncan** (clinical nurse specialist) at **(314) 577-8525** / email: **dmchardy@slu.edu**  
General office at (314) 256-3850 (ABI Clinic) or (314) 768-1050 (St Mary's Clinic)  
Cardinal Glennon (314) 577-5646

After hours, request to speak to the orthopaedic resident on call (or if surgery was at St John's: orthopaedic trauma resident on call).

If emergency, go to SLU or your local ER or dial 911.

**Signature of Physician**

**Signature of RN**

**Signature of Patient**

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