Darin W. Allred, MD
ORTHOPEDIC SURGERY & SPORTS MEDICINE

Shoulder Decompression (No Repair) Post-Op Instructions

Food

Start slow. It is natural to want to eat a lot after surgery. Start with small amounts of your normal food, and eat more as your nausea improves.

Incision

Keep you incision dry for 48 hrs. After 48 hrs you may remove the dressing and shower. Leave the Steri-Strips or glue in place. You may let water run over the incision but do not soak your incision in a bath, swimming pool, lake or hot tub for three weeks. Keep a Band-Aid on the incision until the incision is no longer draining (about 7 days)

Activity/Sling

You may use your shoulder as your pain allows. The sling is for your comfort. Feel free to remove it as your pain allows. Most patients have to wear it for several weeks after surgery.

Swelling

Ice machines or reusable ice pads can be purchased on Amazon if you search shoulder ice machine. They can be great for decreasing pain and swelling. I like them but frozen peas work as well. Be careful to not freeze your skin. I recommend 20 min on and 10 min off unless the machine has a way to prevent freezing (ie temperature settings)

Physical Therapy

Please arrange PT for a 1-2 weeks after surgery. You will do therapy for several months after surgery.

Medications

Rotate over the counter ibuprofen and Tylenol for improved pain control. For example take regular Tylenol followed by Ibuprofen 2 hrs later. Do not take more than the daily dose shown on the label for each one. I also recommend over the counter Pepcid or other antacid while on ibuprofen to prevent a stomach ulcer. Narcotics: see below. If you are also taking daily aspirin to prevent blood clots, take your ibuprofen at least 30 minutes after the aspirin — or at least 8 hours before it.

Narcotics

You may need them for a few days but the quicker you stop using them the better you will feel. It is very rare to need a refill. We DO NOT refill medications after hours or on weekends so plan ahead. It takes 72 hrs to get a refill. If you take narcotic medications regularly you will need to make arrangements with your prescribing provider.

Post Operative Visits

Call for an appointment about 2 weeks after surgery.

Precautionary Measures

1. To prevent infection, you were given IV antibiotics before your surgery.

2. To prevent blood clots, you will need to be active. I want you to walk around your living room once every hour while you are awake. Also take Aspirin 325 mg twice daily for 2 weeks to prevent a blood clot.

3. If you are taking narcotic pain medication (Percocet or Vicodin), you may need a stool softener to prevent constipation. Over-the-counter medication such as Docusate or Milk of Magnesia is recommended.

Emergencies

Call the office at if you experience the following:

- Incision opens
- Increased redness at incision site
- Pain uncontrolled by pain medicine
- Uncontrollable bleeding
- Fever > 101.5°F or shaking chills
- Difficulty breathing or chest pain
- Severe pain or redness in calf
- Painful swelling

If this is a life-threatening emergency, call 911.