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Instruction Sheet following Shoulder Fracture Fixation

Sling:

Wear your sling at **all** times after your surgery (this includes sleeping). There are no exceptions to this rule – it is very important! You will need to wear the sling at all times for about 6 weeks from the date of surgery; this is not related to your level of pain but related to the healing process of the repair. Additionally, you should not carry anything heavier than a pencil in your hand. You are encouraged to move your elbow, wrists, and fingers.

Dressing:

Your dressing may stay on and be showered over for up to two weeks. Unless it is saturated with drainage/bleeding, you can keep it on until your first office visit. We will remove it for you.

Showering:

You may shower 48 hours after surgery. Please use **CAUTION!!** Be careful not to slip and fall. The effects of anesthesia and/or medication may make you drowsy or light-headed. While in the shower you must keep the arm across the front of the body as if it were still in the sling, or allow it to gently hang by your side. Be sure not to lift/use the arm to wash yourself.

Sleeping:

You will most likely have difficulty sleeping in the first few weeks after surgery. Most people find it more comfortable to sleep in a reclining position. You can either sleep in a recliner chair or create this position with pillows. You only need to do this if you find it more comfortable.

Ice:

You can ice the shoulder to reduce swelling and discomfort. Do not ice the shoulder more than 20 minutes at a time. Let the shoulder warm up before reapplication of the ice for about 20 minutes. If you have a cryocuff, you may keep this on continuously. Do not apply ice directly to your skin.

**Medication:**

You will be given pain medication that should be taken as prescribed. Please note that narcotic pain medication may cause constipation. Please remember to take stool softeners (Colace) when using narcotics to help reduce the chance of constipation. You should not use alcohol together with narcotic medication. Do not drive or operate complex machinery while taking narcotic medication. Please note that most narcotic pain medications have side effects that may include nausea, vomiting, sedation, and/or dizzy spells. If you experience any of these side effects to a severe extent, you should contact our office. When your pain is well controlled (2 days to 2 weeks post-op), you may transition yourself to an anti-inflammatory and Tylenol.

You should restart all of your prescription medications once discharged unless specifically instructed otherwise.

Follow-up visit:

You need to see the doctor about 10-14 days following surgery for your first post-op visit. At that time your sutures (stitches) will be removed, and you will be given a prescription to begin physical therapy.

Common Concerns:

Bruising and/or swelling of the shoulder, arm, or hand are common after surgery. This can sometimes extend even into the forearm; this is normal. To relieve this discomfort it is best to ice the shoulder.

Please call if:

1. Any oozing or redness of the wound, fevers ($>100.3^{\circ}\text{F}$), or chills.
2. Any difficulty breathing or heaviness in the chest.

REMEMBER - these are only guidelines for what to expect following shoulder fracture fixation surgery. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call the office.