

The Shoulder Clinic of Idaho
Dr. Thomas E. Goodwin

**POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR
TOTAL SHOULDER ARTHROPLASTY**

Be assured that I wish to make this shoulder surgical experience as pleasant as possible for you with regards to management of pain and progressive recovery of shoulder function.

Your shoulder surgery has been performed through a 4-5 inch incision on your shoulder. We have utilized a shoulder injection with a long-acting local anesthetic. This may not be completely worn off for 12-24 hours from the time of surgery.

In regards to postoperative comfort, the nurses will begin giving you pain medication prior to the block wearing off. Once you are home, I would suggest taking 1-2 pain pills every four hours with some food as needed. Pain pills may cause you to become constipated, please begin Milk of Magnesia at bedtime after surgery unless you don't need it.

I would advise using ice or a cold pack on your shoulder continuously for 24-48 hours after you arrive home from surgery. You cannot overdo ice as long as it is not applied directly to any exposed skin. It is beneficial to ice for 20 – 30 minutes 3-4 times a day for the first two weeks. Dr. Goodwin recommends a cold therapy unit to assist with this. Our office supplies this unit for up to two weeks for a \$37.00 fee. For the first night or two, you probably will be more comfortable sleeping in a reclining position rather than laying flat in bed. A reclining chair or extra thick pillows are advised.

On the day following surgery, you may remove your arm from the sling to begin elbow, hand and wrist motion. You may begin using your operated arm for eating, dressing and other light activities as you feel comfortable. Over the next 2-4 weeks emphasis is on range of motion of your arm and shoulder. Strengthening exercises will be instructed later. Avoid any activities with the operated shoulder other than the instructed motion routine.

Please keep a bandage on your shoulder for the first week. You may shower if you cover the bandage with plastic wrap (Press and Seal works great). Keep the bandage as clean and dry as possible. It is also important to keep your armpit clean and dry to avoid fungal infections. If your armpit becomes red and irritated, apply over-the-counter anti-fungal ointment to the affected area 3-4 times daily.

You may begin driving (preferably an automatic vehicle) after surgery when you are no longer taking pain pills during the day.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call the office at 323-4747 or after 5:00 pm at 866-3441.

Very sincerely,

Thomas E. Goodwin, M.D.