

The Shoulder Clinic of Idaho

Dr. Thomas Goodwin

POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR SHOULDER ARTHROSCOPY

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 utilizing a small scope through two or three ¼” long incisions 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, it is very important to begin your pain medications that I have prescribed prior to your shoulder block wearing off. I would suggest taking one pain pill every four hours with some food before the block wears off. If needed, you may increase that pain medication, i.e. taking two at a time for pain after the block has worn off. Pain pills may cause you to become constipated, we recommend using Miralax and Senna once you arrive home.

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. For the first night or two you will probably be more comfortable sleeping in a reclined position as opposed to lying 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 and begin moving the shoulder and arm about as tolerated without fear of causing any damage to the surgery area. You may lean over and begin some gentle pendulum motion with the operated arm and may increase the use of your arm and shoulder for motion exercises. You may use your opposite arm to assist in raising the operated arm if need be. An over-the-door pulley and rope system may be provided to assist with your motion exercises. Please begin using your operated arm for eating and general hygiene.

You may also remove the shoulder bandage on the day following surgery ,but leave the small brown Steri-strips over the incisions. Wait until the second day following surgery to bathe or shower. There is no need to cover the shoulder for showering. Continue to steadily increase motion activity with your shoulder and arm and continue to use pain medications as needed.

Over the next two weeks, the emphasis is on range of motion of your arm and shoulder. Strengthening exercises will be instructed later. Avoid extended reaching, pushing, pulling, or lifting with the operated shoulder for the first 2-3 weeks.

Begin driving and return to work when you feel able. The more you can be out of the shoulder sling after the second day from surgery the better off. If your shoulder or arm feels achy or fatigued, it is certainly okay to use the shoulder sling intermittently for support during the first week.

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

Very sincerely,

Thomas E. Goodwin, M.D.