
Post-Operative Instructions

Shoulder Arthroscopic Decompression

- Use ice or Polar Care Unit on the operative shoulder for 72 hours after surgery. You can use the Polar Care or ice for 30 to 45 minutes at a time if it is not uncomfortably cold. Do this several times a day.
- If using the Polar Care unit, you can leave the pad in place and disconnect the tubing as needed to get around. When reconnecting the tubing, make sure the connection is tight between the two parts of the tubing. While using the Polar Care, make sure the surgical towel is between your skin and the pad throughout the entire pad. If your shoulder becomes uncomfortably cold, turn the Polar Care unit off.
- You should remove your surgical dressing 48 hours after your surgery.
- After you remove the surgical dressing, you should leave your incisions open to the air unless there is drainage.
- You may shower and get your operative shoulder wet 4 days after your surgery, provided there is no drainage from your incisions. If there is still drainage 4 days after your surgery, call. Do not soak your shoulder for a month after your surgery.
- Use your sling until your nerve block wears off but at least for 24 hours. After that, you may spend less and less time in the sling as your pain allows.
- After your nerve block wears off, you may begin working on moving the operative arm out in front of you, to your side, and behind your back, letting pain be your guide. You may benefit from a family member or friend assisting with this.
- Do not lift anything with your operative arm. Do not use your operative arm for repetitive activity or for activity that requires any significant amount of force.
- Laying flat on your back may be very uncomfortable at first. You may find it more comfortable to sleep in a recliner or with pillows behind your back for the first several days after your surgery.
- If you do not already have one, call to make a follow-up appointment for 10 days after your surgery.
- Call with any questions at 545-0215.