

Dr. Ben Szerlip

SHOULDER & SPORTS MEDICINE SURGEON

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Discharge Instructions after Surgery: Shoulder

1. If you have not already done so, please schedule your first physical therapy appointment (typically 5-14 days after surgery) with a therapist at 512-977-0000. In addition, you will need to schedule your first post-operative appointment with the surgeon 10-14 days after surgery if one has not already been made.
2. Typically, dressing may be removed 3 days after surgery. Small white band-aids (steri-strips) should be left on until 1st post op visit. Surgery site must be kept clean and left open air if no drainage. If there is fluid coming from the incision site keep covered with a bandage (gauze pads and tape). If this persists for 10 days after surgery return to office to have the surgical site evaluated.
3. An ice pack may be used intermittently on the affected extremity for comfort. Use a thin towel underneath to keep any dressing and incisions dry. It is recommended to use the ice pack for 20 minutes 3-4 times a day, for 1-2 weeks as desired.
4. Patients can shower the day after surgery but avoid running water directly onto incision for 7 days. Do not scrub or soak the incisions. You may gently pat dry or air dry the incisions when getting out of the shower. Running water is fine after 7 days, do not submerge your incisions. Do not get in a hot tub, bathtub, or swimming pool for 3 weeks following surgery.
5. A sling will be provided at discharge. **For the first 24-48 hours after surgery you will need to remove your hand from the sling every few hours while awake to gently straighten the elbow and check for pressure areas.** You should only remove the sling for instructions above, or for showers. You may use the operative arm for activities of daily living that do not require the arm to leave the side of the body (eating, drinking, bathing, writing, etc.). The sling is not required for sleeping. Most patients prefer to sleep in a recliner or with several pillows stacked at the head of the bed for the first few weeks.
6. Please fill your post-operative prescriptions, including pain medications before or right after surgery. Patients who go home with a nerve block may only need occasional pain medication.
 - Take pain medication ONLY if needed and follow written instructions
 - Pain medication can ONLY be prescribed during business hours and **CANNOT** be given or refilled after hours, on weekends, or holidays. **BE SURE TO ACCOUNT FOR THIS SO YOU DO NOT RUN OUT OVER WEEKENDS.** Any calls for med refills should be made by end of business day on Thurs or early Friday morning.
 - A prescribed medication may also be taken as needed for severe nausea.
 - PATIENTS THAT HAVE HAD A TENDON OR FRACTURE REPAIR SHOULD MINIMIZE THE USE OF NSAIDS FOR 6 WEEKS AFTER SURGERY. (EX: MOTRIN, IBUPROFEN, ALEVE, ADVIL). This will help the body's ability to heal.
7. Notify us of problems such as: fever over 101.5, excessive redness or drainage from the incisions, severe tenderness or numbness. If you have questions specifically for your surgeon or their staff, please call 512-977-0000 during office hours and you should receive a call within one business day or less.