

Shoulder Surgery Home Instructions

Prairie Orthopaedic & Plastic Surgery

INFORMATION

- The following information is available for you to review at any time on our website:
- www.prairie-ortho.com
 - Click on Patient Education and Shoulder Surgery Home Instructions

SLING MANAGEMENT

Forearm strap – helps to keep elbow deep in sling.

Neck Clip

Thumb strap- OK to use this as shown or not use based on comfort.

Keep forearm parallel with floor.



SLING MANAGEMENT

- Most patients will feel that keeping their arm and sling more in front of their body versus out to the side feels better.



SLING MANAGEMENT

- Sling should be worn at all times except when bathing for the first 6 weeks unless otherwise instructed by your physician or physical therapist.

SLING MANAGEMENT

- During showering or bathing use a 2 liter pop bottle or rolled up towel in a zip-loc bag to keep your elbow away from your side.
 - For some patient your physicians or therapist may allow you to shower with your arm down at your side and with no pillow.

SLING MANAGEMENT

- You should support your arm with pillows when sitting at home or in a car.
- Once supported with pillows it is then OK to undo the neck strap while sitting to give your neck a break.



SLING MANAGEMENT

- Only use your non-surgical arm to help adjust your sling position.
- Your surgical arm should be relaxed at all times.

DRESSING CHANGE

- As soon as you are home and there is minimal drainage it is OK for you to remove all the dressings and cover your stitch sites with band-aids only. This will allow the ice to have a better impact on pain and swelling.
- Your stitches will be removed somewhere between 10-18 days after surgery by the Physician Assistant or Physical Therapist.

ICING AT HOME

- We recommend that you ice your surgical shoulder at least 4-5 times per day for 15-20 minutes. You may ice your shoulder as often as you like to help control pain, but don't go more than 20 minutes every hour. You should plan to ice for at least the first 4 weeks after surgery and maybe longer.
- Always keep one layer of fabric between the ice pack and your skin to protect your skin.

ICING AT HOME

- Prairie Orthopaedic & Plastic Surgery does have ice packs available for purchase.
- Homemade Ice Pack Recipe: In a doubled up zip-lock bag, place 2 parts water and 1 part rubbing alcohol. Place in freezer. The ice pack will freeze slushy and can be applied to the shoulder and re-frozen between uses. Make sure to place a layer of fabric between your skin and the ice pack when in use.

ICING AT HOME



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PAIN MEDICATION

- Your physician will prescribe pain medication for you when you leave the hospital. If you need a refill of your pain medications please let the pharmacy know as soon as possible. Or call our office and leave a message on the medication refill line.
- You should not wait until you are completely out of medication to call your pharmacy as it may take a day or two to complete medication refills.

PAIN MEDICATION

- Pain medications may cause minor side effects such as nausea, itching, and constipation. Do not be alarmed by these symptoms. If the side effects are not tolerable please contact your physician to discuss other treatment options.
- Make sure to use a stool softener each day that you use prescription narcotics to prevent constipation. Ask your pharmacist for an over the counter stool softener or use Milk of Magnesia or prune juice if you prefer.

PAIN MEDICATION

- It is OK for you to use Over the Counter pain medicine such as Ibuprofen, Advil, Tylenol or Aleve if your physician has approved this. You should follow dosage instructions and only take these if your primary care physician is in agreement that they are safe for your specific circumstances.
- If your surgeon has prescribed prescription strength anti-inflammatories after surgery they may ask you to wait on taking any Advil, Ibuprofen, or Aleve. Please make sure to check with them for specifics.

SHOWERING

- It is OK for you to get your shoulder and stitches wet as soon as three days after surgery. You can also cover your shoulder with Press-n-Seal if you prefer while showering.
- Do not soak your shoulder under water, just let the clean water run over the stitches and pat dry them with a towel.
- Don't forget to use a 2 liter pop bottle or rolled up towel under your arm to keep the arm from resting against your side while in the shower.

SHOWERING

- You should lean over at the waist and allow your arm to naturally fall away from your side to gain access to wash under your arm or to put on deodorant or dry your armpit.



DRESSING

- Many people find wearing button up shirts are easier to get off and on the first few weeks.
- Bending forward at the waist and letting your arm naturally fall away from your side will allow greater ease of getting a sleeve on.

DRESSING

- Whether you wear a pull over or button up shirt, you should always lean forward and place your surgical arm into the sleeve first, then either pull it over your head or place non-surgical arm in next. Your surgical arm shoulder always be relaxed at your side.

DRESSING

- Pull on pants are helpful the first couple weeks, as buttoning or snapping pants at the waistband will be difficult for your surgical arm.
- You will not be able to use your surgical arm to pull on socks or put on or tie shoes for several weeks.

RESTING AND SLEEPING POSITIONS

- Many people find they are unable to sleep lying flat on their back in bed for several weeks to several months following their surgery. It is OK to lie in bed if tolerated.
- You should plan to sleep in a reclined position with pillows for support under your forearm and behind your upper arm to help position the shoulder in the most comfortable way.

RESTING AND SLEEPING POSITIONS

- When resting in a chair or recliner you should use pillows under your sling to support the weight of your arm.
- It is OK to use your non-surgical arm to take your surgical arm out of the sling pocket and lay it on the pillow to stretch your elbow straight for awhile.
- Just hook your sling all back up when you are ready to get up and move around again.



RESTING AND SLEEPING POSITIONS

- If you want to lie down for awhile in bed you will need to place a rolled towel or pillow behind your arm to keep your elbow off the bed for support and to decrease pain.



RESTING AND SLEEPING POSITIONS

- It is OK to return to sleeping in bed whenever you are comfortable to do so.
- You can not sleep on your surgical shoulder for at least 3 months and maybe longer depending on pain level.
- Some people find that sleeping on their non-surgical side on the couch gives them some relief from constantly sleeping in a recliner.

PHYSICAL THERAPY PLAN

- Your physician recommends PT for your shoulder 3 times per week for the first 6 weeks. After 6 weeks most patients are able to decrease to 2 times per week for 6 weeks and then 1 time per week for 4-6 more weeks.
- Most patients will be in therapy for approximately 4 months and about 35 total visits after shoulder surgery.

PHYSICAL THERAPY PLAN

- We will contact your insurance company eligibility and benefits department to determine if you need prior authorization for Physical Therapy.
- We will let you know if you have a limited number of visits per year and whether or not you have a copay due each visit.
- Let your therapist know if your insurance limitations might be a concern.

PHYSICAL THERAPY PLAN

- Please remember that it is always your option to receive Physical Therapy at which ever clinic you prefer.
- If you would like to receive therapy at out clinic, the front desk will assist you with creating your appointments.

PHYSICAL THERAPY PLAN

- It is always better to schedule your appointments for several weeks in advance depending on your preferred therapy schedule.
- If you would like to receive therapy at another clinic, you just need to call that clinic and give them your therapy script.

PHYSICAL THERAPY PLAN

- Your therapist will instruct you on your home exercises based on your specific surgery.
- It is important to watch your posture despite being in the sling.
 - Sit up Straight
 - Keep shoulders back
 - Don't slouch, use pillows to support the weight of your arm.

PRECAUTIONS

- You should not try to lift your arm away from your side or up in the air above shoulder height for at least 10 weeks, unless instructed by your PT.
- You should be very careful to relax your shoulder in your sling and not hold your shoulder up in the air by your ear. RELAX in the sling and let the neck strap support the weight of your arm.

PRECAUTIONS

- Lifting Precautions
 - 1 pound for the first 3 months for all lifting, pulling, pushing and carrying with the surgical arm.
 - 5 pounds between months 3 and 4
 - 10 pounds between months 4 and 5
 - 20 pounds between months 5 and 6
 - No restrictions after 6 months
 - These precautions may vary depending on surgery type.

DRIVING

- You should not drive while taking prescription narcotics. This would be considered as “driving under the influence” and is illegal.
- You may return to driving when you are no longer using narcotics prior to 6 hours before driving and when you feel comfortable to do so.
- Many people find it difficult to drive until 4-6 weeks after surgery or when they are no longer wearing the sling.

FOLLOW-UP

- You will need to follow up with the Physician or Physician Assistant at 2 weeks after surgery for stitch removal, and to get a work note if needed.
- You should then follow-up as needed at 6 weeks and 12 weeks after surgery so the physician can determine if you are progressing appropriately.
- Please call our office to schedule at any other time if there is a concern or let your PT know.

FOLLOW-UP

- Please call our office anytime you have questions.
- You should call us immediately should you develop a fever over 100.5 or if you notice increased redness or drainage around your incisions after the first 3 days.
- 402-489-4700