



Orthopaedic Specialists
of Central Arizona

DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS AFTER SHOULDER ARTHROSCOPY

Depending on the nature of your shoulder problem and the necessary surgical treatment, the post-operative instructions may vary from patient to patient.

- Activity:** The affected arm will be in a sling following surgery. The sling provides for both rest and protection during the healing process. Please try to keep your arm in the sling at all times, except for dressing and bathing. Sponge baths are recommended for the first two days, using a washcloth to keep your armpit clean (this can usually be done with the arm kept in the sling by gently leaning forward and allowing the arm to fall away from your body).
- Dressings:** You should maintain the original surgical dressing for the first 48 hours after surgery. At that time, you may remove the surgical dressing. Sutures are typically used on your incisions. You may shower after 48 hours. After showering, cover the incisions with Band-Aids or a gauze dressing. **DO NOT** bathe, swim, or otherwise soak your shoulder until after your follow-up appointment. You may notice some redness about the incisions as they heal. If this redness increases or you notice any discharge from the wounds after the first several days, please call the office.
- Pain Control:** You will be given a prescription for pain medication (usually Oxycodone, to be taken 1 tablet every 6 hrs.) after surgery. Use this as needed. This may be combined with Advil (3 tabs three times a day with food) or Aleve (2 tabs twice a day with food). Once the initial pain subsides, try to manage with just Extra-strength Tylenol, Advil, or Aleve. It is common to have swelling and discomfort for several days or even several weeks after surgery. Icing of the shoulder is extremely helpful to control both pain and swelling. Ice the operated shoulder for 20 minutes at least four times a day for the first seven days. After that, ice the shoulder if it is still swollen or you still have pain.
- Exercises:** Plan to avoid demanding activities and athletics for up to 6 weeks after surgery.
- Work:** Plan to take 1 – 2 weeks off from work following surgery. You may resume work once you are comfortable- this will obviously be influenced by the type of work that you do.
- Follow-up:** Your post-operative follow-up appointment will be scheduled prior to surgery (usually in 7-10 days).

Each patient will respond and recover from surgery at their own pace. While it is informative and useful to “compare notes” with a friend, relative or colleague who has also undergone arthroscopic surgery, please do not place undue importance on keeping up with them. Remember

that each patient's problem and surgery is unique. If you encounter specific problems please call the office as soon as possible.