

Post Operative Instructions
Shoulder Arthroscopy
Jason Browdy, M.D.

You have just had shoulder arthroscopy. Following these guidelines should give you the best chance for a quick recovery.

What Was Done? Shoulder arthroscopy is a very powerful tool, as it allows surgeons to diagnose and treat a variety of conditions. A number of decisions are made based on the intra-operative arthroscopic findings. Dr. Browdy will discuss the findings and the procedures performed with your family after surgery, and will generally go over these things with you at your first office visit.

Diet: Advance to solid food as tolerated.

Bandages: In 48 hours, you may remove your dressings and place small band-aids over the incision sites. You will leave the surgery center with a thigh high compression hose on each leg. Please continue to use these for two weeks after surgery to prevent blood clots.

Bathing/Shower: You should keep the surgical site dry until the incision is fully healed. This generally takes 7-10 days. You should consider sponge bathing for the first 7-10 days after surgery. Once the incision is fully healed, as determined by Dr. Browdy, you may get your incision wet in the shower, but you should avoid submerging under water until you are four weeks out of surgery.

Activity: Your activity with respect to the shoulder depends heavily on what was done during surgery. You will usually leave the surgery center with a sling, and Dr. Browdy will discuss with your family how much you can use your arm. At your first office visit, Dr. Browdy will discuss with you a gradual timeline for return to normal activities.

It is a good idea to get up and move around frequently around your home to prevent blood clots.

Medications: Many patients elect to have a "block" prior to surgery to help with post-operative pain relief. This block provides significant pain relief in the early post-operative period, but it will wear off 8-12 hours after surgery.

Medications (cont.):

You will be prescribed two narcotic pain medications to help with control the pain you might experience after the block wears off. It is very important to "stay ahead" of the pain by taking the medication prior to the onset of severe pain. We recommend using oxycodone for a maximum of 48 hours. Take your first dose before bed time the night of surgery. If you start to regain sensation in the hand or fingers before bed time, it is advisable to take your pain medicine - **do not wait until you hurt to take your pain medicine**. You should switch to hydrocodone on the third day after surgery.

Pain medicine can cause nausea, so take the medication with food. You may be given a prescription to deal with nausea. You do not need to fill this prescription, but you should keep it handy in the event you need it.

Unless advised otherwise, please start taking a full Aspirin a day after surgery for three weeks to help minimize the risk of a blood clot. If you cannot tolerate taking Aspirin, please notify Dr. Browdy and his staff.

Comfort Measures:

As part of the recovery process following surgery, Dr. Browdy highly encourages his patients to use a motorized cold therapy machine (a.k.a. cryo unit). The unit is beneficial for the entire post-operative course by reducing pain and swelling during recovery and throughout physical therapy treatment. The machine will give 6-8 hours of continuous cold therapy to the affected body part. If you elect not use a cryo unit, you may use a large bag of ice. In either case, keeping the shoulder cool will help significantly reduce swelling and pain. If you have an ice machine with a thermostat, do not let the temperature go below 45 degrees, as frostbite can occur.

In most cases, you will be in a sling. It is generally permissible to come out of the sling periodically to move the elbow and hand, however you may be told otherwise by Dr. Browdy, depending on what procedures are performed.

When sleeping or resting, you may find it more comfortable to use a reclining chair and a pillow under the forearm for support rather than lying in a bed. This is optional.

Problems:

Your shoulder may have swelling and soreness for the first several days. This is to be expected. You may also notice some bruising around the shoulder, arm and even chest wall.

It is not uncommon for the hand to experience slight swelling and/or numbness or tingling in the hand. This can be in part due to constriction of the wrist by your sling, and removing the sling periodically can help.

Please contact Dr. Browdy's office if you have any of the following:

1. Severe Pain
2. A Temperature above 101 Degrees
3. Pain, redness or significant swelling in your knee or calf (a bruised appearance is normal)

Please call us if you have **any** questions.

Appointments:

You will need to see Dr. Browdy for a follow-up appointment 7-10 days after surgery. Please call the office to make this appointment. At this first appointment physical therapy will likely be prescribed.

Phone Numbers:

Motion Orthopaedics: 314-991-2150

For any urgent need after normal business hours or on weekends you may call the after hours line at 1-888-456-8166.

Medication Refill Policy:

It is the policy of Motion Orthopaedics that narcotic medications will only be refilled during office hours. Please be patient with the office staff. If you call during patient hours, your call may be returned at the end of the day.