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Post-Operative Information  
for  
**Shoulder Arthroscopy**

\*The following are general guidelines that may vary depending on the individual, the details of the procedure, and/or the anesthesia that was administered.

**Diet**

- Post-operative nausea and vomiting is a common side-effect of anesthesia.
- Progress your diet as tolerated.
- Drink plenty of non-alcoholic, non-caffeinated fluids.

**Wound care**

- Do NOT remove surgical dressings unless saturated.
- Do not submerge your shoulder such as in a tub, pool, hot tub, or ocean.
- A small amount of drainage and swelling in the affected extremity is common.
  - If the incision is draining, reinforce with sterile gauze and occlusive dressings.
- Swelling in the affected extremity is common.
  - To decrease, ice the affected extremity above the heart
- If there is excessive drainage and/or redness surrounding the incision or red streaks coming away from it, increased pain, and/or increased temperature please call the office immediately.

**Icing**

- Ice your hip 5-6 times a day, 20 minutes at a time, for the first 2-3 days.
- If you purchased an ice machine (Polar Care), use the above intervals for at least 3-4 hours a day.
  - Be sure to put a thin sheet between the ice and your skin, as the ice can cause frost-bite.

**Activity**

- No lifting after surgery.
- Wear the sling until your post-operative appointment.
  - You may remove the sling several times daily for gentle motion exercises of the shoulder (pendulums) and elbow.
- Schedule PT to begin after your first post-operative appointment.
- Many patients have found that sleeping upright in a chair with a pillow behind the affected shoulder is helpful for pain and comfort.
- Avoid prolonged periods of sitting (without the leg elevated) or long distance traveling for 2 weeks.
- You have been given home exercises in this packet that you may initiate the day after surgery.

**School/Work**

- If pain is tolerable, you may return to school or sedentary work 3-4 days after surgery.

## **Driving**

- **No driving** until you are off narcotic pain medications.
- You may drive when you feel your turning time is not affected by your surgery and you can do so safely.
- For right arm surgery, this may be 4-6 weeks. It may be sooner on the left.
- Please use caution in the beginning and consider first practicing in an empty parking lot.

## **Pain Management**

- You will be prescribed a narcotic pain medication to be taken *as needed* for pain.
  - Use the least amount as possible to alleviate pain.
- Common side effects include nausea, vomiting, and drowsiness.
  - To decrease these, take medication with food.
  - If nausea and vomiting persist, call the office.
- Narcotic pain medications can cause constipation.
  - Take a stool softener daily (i.e. Colace<sup>®</sup>, Senokot<sup>®</sup>, milk of magnesia), drink extra fluids, and increase your daily fiber intake.
- Narcotic pain medications like Vicodin<sup>®</sup> and Percocet<sup>®</sup> contain Tylenol<sup>®</sup> (acetaminophen).
  - Do not exceed more than 4000mg of acetaminophen per day.
- Do not drive or operate machinery while taking narcotic pain medications.
- Do not drink alcohol while taking narcotic pain medications.
- Use ibuprofen (max 1800mg/day) in addition to narcotic pain medicine to:
  - help with pain and swelling
  - smooth out the post-operative “peaks and valleys”
  - reduce overall amount of pain medications required
  - increase the time intervals between narcotic pain medication usage
- If you received a block during surgery, this typically will wear off in 6-8 hours, but may last up to 24 hours and cause a sensation of “dead arm.”
  - You should start taking medication before this time.
  - We suggest taking pain medication prior to bed the first night to avoid waking up in severe pain.
- Call the office if you continue to have uncontrollable pain.
- Please refer to the pain contract for additional information.

### **Follow-up Care and Questions**

- **Please be aware that we work out of 2 facilities:**
  - **Monday, Wednesday, Thursday** at 1598 South County Trail in East Greenwich
  - **Tuesday** at 100 Butler Drive, Providence**\*\*Please verify the location prior to your appointment\*\***
  
- If you have any further questions, call Dr. Tabaddor's Administrative Assistant, Jackie, at (401) 402-1040.
  
- **You will be seeing Arlene Kavanagh, PA-C, Dr. Tabaddor's physician assistant, for your post-operative appointment.**

### **EMERGENCIES**

- Call the office at (401) 402-1040 if you experience:
  - Incision opens
  - Redness, streaking, and/or pus at incision sites
  - Uncontrollable bleeding
  - Pain uncontrolled by pain medicine
  - Painful swelling
  - Severe pain or redness in calf
  - Difficulty breathing or chest pain
  - Fever > 101° F for 24 hours or shaking chills