

Sumner E. Karas, M.D. / Open Reconstructive Surgical Procedures
POST OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

SURGERY

Because of the magnitude of your shoulder reconstruction, your surgery was done with an open approach rather than arthroscopically. Your surgical procedure requires you to spend one night in the hospital, You will receive antibiotics intravenously to prevent infection.

DRESSING

A sterile dressing is covering your wound. If the dressing becomes stained or dirty it may be changed; otherwise, It can be removed **5 days after surgery**. If there are any signs of infection, such as redness or if you have a fever greater than 101, call our office immediately.

PAIN

At the time of your pre-operative visit, you will be given a prescription for pain medication, usually Percocet and/or Oxycontin. You may **not** operate a motor vehicle while taking these medications. Most patients require these medications for pain control for 4-7 days after surgery. In addition, the use of crushed ice in **double** plastic bags can greatly reduce pain and swelling for the first 72 hours after surgery. Many patients benefit from taking anti-inflammatory medicine such as Aleve or Motrin, along with the narcotic medications. Some patients experience constipation with narcotics; therefore it is best to drink a lot of fluids and to eat foods containing fiber.

BATHING

You may not shower until **5 days after surgery**. Until then you may sponge bathe, but may not get the incisions wet. You should not soak your shoulder in a swimming pool, bathtub or whirlpool until **AT LEAST 14 DAYS AFTER SURGERY**. When you get in the shower 5 days post-op, let the water run over the incision. Remember not to soak or scrub the incisions. Avoid putting any ointment lotions, etc on the incisions. Steri-strips will be placed on your incision after surgery, which will fall off on their own. It is ok to get them wet; just pat them dry after you shower. Do not remove the steri-strips. It is not necessary to cover the incision after the initial dressing is removed.

SLING

You will remain in your sling for approximately 1 month. Most of the time you should remain in your sling; but you may remove the sling to dangle your arm for brief periods and for axillary hygiene. When your arm is out of the sling you may move your elbow, so long as your elbow stays by your side. Do not try to lift your arm away from your body. Bend forward and let gravity take your arm away from your body to gain access to your axilla.

ACTIVITY

You should keep your hand moving (with the exercise ball) but you should not be doing any other activities with your operative limb. You should be cautious and err toward doing less. Driving is not recommended until you've been out of your sling, approximately 1 week and are no longer taking narcotic pain medication.

PHYSICAL THERAPY

Dr. Karas will make arrangements for you to start physical therapy when he sees you at your first post-operative appointment . The nature of your physical therapy is dependent upon the findings and the nature of your surgical procedure. Your physical therapy will be customized for you.