

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR PATIENTS AFTER
SHOULDER ARTHROSCOPY WITH SUBACROMIAL DECOMPRESSION
J. THEODORE SCHWARTZ, JR., M.D.**

DO NOT DRIVE OR OPERATE MACHINERY FOR 24 HOURS.

Some anesthetics have delayed metabolism and can interfere with the ability to perform these tasks.

DO NOT DRINK ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES FOR 24 HOURS.

DO NOT MAKE IMPORTANT DECISIONS OR SIGN LEGAL DOCUMENTS UNTIL THE NEXT DAY.

DO NOT EAT HEAVY OR LARGE MEALS UNTIL THE NEXT DAY.

A heavy meal may be difficult to digest. Spicy and greasy foods should be avoided.

DO NOTIFY PHYSICIAN IF YOU HAVE NOT VOIDED WITHIN SIX HOURS.

General Information: At the time of your surgery, an interscalene block is placed by the anesthesiologist. **Your shoulder and arm will be numb, and you will not be able to move your hand and elbow.** This will wear off between 6 and 24 hours after surgery. You may also experience fluid drainage from the incisions the first day after surgery. This is because arthroscopy is performed by “pumping” water into your shoulder. It is also common to have an elevated temperature the first 24-48 hours after surgery. Tylenol is recommended to reduce fever. However, do not take additional Tylenol if you are taking a prescription pain medicine containing Tylenol. It is also recommended that you take deep breaths and cough every hour to expand your lungs.

Pain Management

Take the prescribed medication for pain. Follow the directions on the package. If there are any questions regarding the pain medication, please call our office. If you wish, you may take over-the-counter pain medication such as acetaminophen (Tylenol), ibuprofen (Advil, Nuprin, or Motrin), or naproxen (Aleve) instead. **It is recommended that you take pain medication with food.**

Icing and Elevation

You have been fitted with a Polar-Care device which circulates cold water around your shoulder for pain relief and control of post-operative swelling. You may use this device continuously for the first three to five days and then as needed thereafter. You will need to refill the thermos with ice water as necessary.

Dressings

Special waterproof bandages have been applied to your incisions. Remove the dressing four days after the surgery. (Do not remove steri-strips.) Cover the small incision with waterproof bandaids for one week.

Showering

You may shower starting the day after surgery with these special bandages. Avoid soaking or scrubbing the incision for two weeks.

Activities

Wear the sling only while the nerve block is still working so the arm is protected. Once the nerve block has worn off, you should start moving the arm to prevent stiffness to the shoulder.

Follow-up

You should have a follow-up appointment for approximately 10 days after surgery. If you do not have a follow-up appointment, please call the office to arrange one.

If something seems wrong or out of the ordinary, please contact the office at (925) 355-7350.

CALL PHYSICIAN IMMEDIATELY IF YOU:

- ✓ Observe excessive bleeding, drainage, redness, or swelling;
- ✓ Develop unexpected numbness, coldness, or change of color at operative site;
- ✓ Have extreme pain not relieved by prescribed pain medication, or a medication causes a reaction;
- ✓ Notice a foul odor emanating from surgical site, or have a temperature of 101° F or higher.
- ✓ If it is an emergency and you cannot reach your physician, go to the nearest emergency room or dial 911.