

# Dr. Matthew L. Hansen, MD

*Sports Medicine and Shoulder Specialist*

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## POST-OPERATIVE EDUCATION: SHOULDER FRACTURES

### SLING:

**Clavicle Open Reduction Internal Fixation, Proximal Humerus ORIF:** You will wear a sling for 4-6 weeks after surgery. This is necessary to protect your clavicle while it heals properly. You **MUST** keep your sling on at ALL times unless you are doing approved exercises or showering. Just let your arm hang down in the shower. It is safe to remove your sling while seated and awake and rest your arm on pillows to give your neck and elbow a rest from the sling. We do want you to be up and walking around at home as much as possible after surgery.

**MOVING YOUR SHOULDER:** This is dependent on the procedure performed:

**Clavicle Fracture:** It is OK for you to loosen your sling and move your elbow, wrist and hand gently throughout the day. You may also squeeze a stress ball with your arm in the sling. Many patients will recover without the need for formal physical therapy.

**Proximal Humerus:** It is OK for you to loosen your sling and move your wrist and hand gently throughout the day. You may also squeeze a stress ball with your arm in the sling. You will learn your shoulder exercises before you are discharged from the hospital or when you come to our office and start physical therapy.

### ICE:

Please note that with the dressings placed during surgery, you may notice decreased benefit from the ice. Often placing the ice adjacent to the surgical site increases the effectiveness. Use as needed and if you notice benefit. See the next section for suggestions to make the ice more beneficial. Ice is most helpful in the first 3 days after surgery, but may help up to 2 weeks after surgery. We do not recommend that you use heat, as this can increase swelling.

You may use a commercially available ice bag or fill a large plastic bag with ice and water. (Do not place a plastic bag directly on your skin, rather place a towel on your shoulder in between your skin and the ice bag.) You can ice your shoulder 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off throughout the day. Do not ice an area longer than 30 minutes at a time, as this can cause frost bite.

## **BANDAGES:**

Some dressings are low profile, and may be used for 7-14 days after surgery. If tape and WHITE gauze were used, you may remove them the morning after surgery. Please leave the YELLOW gauze on your skin and cover with Band-Aids. You may remove the Band-Aids and gauze to shower THREE DAYS after surgery. If you have white Steri Strips, DO NOT remove them. It is OK to get your incisions wet after the bandage is removed, but it is very important not to soak the incision underwater (no bath, pool, hot tub etc.) for 3 weeks. It is OK to wash the incisions gently with soap and gently pat dry with a towel. Do not place any lotion or other ointment on your incisions. You may cover them with Band-Aids for comfort if they catch on your clothing.

## **MEDICATIONS:**

Narcotic pain medicine (such as Percocet – oxycodone or Norco – hydrocodone): Take this AS NEEDED only. Start with Percocet (stronger) if given a prescription for multiple narcotics. Transition to Norco (less potent) as your pain improves. You may stop narcotics whenever you can tolerate the pain. Do not take additional Tylenol (also called acetaminophen) with these medicines, as they already have Tylenol in them. You may SUBSTITUTE Tylenol for a narcotic pill if you choose to. Be certain that you do not exceed the maximum Tylenol dose as noted on the Tylenol bottle.

Stool softener: Pain medicines often cause constipation. It is best to take most of this medicine with some food, as it can cause a little stomach upset.

Zofran (ondansetron): You may take this medication if you are having nausea or vomiting.

Robaxin (methocarbamol): This muscle relaxer may help with spasms experienced commonly after shoulder arthroscopy. Take only if having spasms.

\*Please do not take NSAIDs such as Ibuprofen or Motrin, as these may slow healing of bone and tendon.

## **FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENTS:**

You should have a **follow-up appointment** with your surgeon in about 2 weeks. You may also have an additional visit with the Physician Assistant within a few days of your surgery. Call (480) 964-2908 right away if you do not have an appointment already scheduled. We will check your incisions and remove any sutures at the 2-week visit. We will also answer any specific questions you may have about your surgery. If directed by your surgeon, begin Physical Therapy as directed, as patients benefit from PT after some types of shoulder surgery.

**CALL OUR OFFICE** at (480) 964-2908 with any urgent or emergent questions or concerns that you may have, or if you develop swelling in your leg with calf pain, swelling that will not go away when you elevate your leg, a temperature above 101.4, or drainage from your incisions.

If you experience high fever (above 102.5), chest pain, difficulty breathing, fainting: go to an **Emergency Department** close to your house.