



New England Shoulder and Elbow Center

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POST-OPERATIVE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ's) FOR SHOULDER SURGERY

(Please read these carefully)

SLINGS

You will be wearing your sling AT ALL TIMES except for hygiene or therapy.

You will be wearing your sling WHILE YOU SLEEP.

Length of time you will wear your sling depends on your surgery

Rotator Cuff Surgery – Approximately 4-6 weeks

Labral Surgery / Shoulder Stabilization – Approximately 4 weeks

Shoulder Replacement Surgery – Approximately 2-4 weeks

NO Active Motion of the Shoulder is allowed immediately post-op (No lifting your hands above your shoulders like if you were to brush your hair)

Motion of the Elbow / Wrist / Hand is OK

* Wearing the sling at all times can commonly irritate the nerves in your elbow. This can cause a Shooting pain down into your hand and fingers. This is a common side effect of the sling. If you experience this shooting/sharp pain in your elbow/hand/fingers, remove the sling and let your arm rest gently at your side for a few hours. This should help with the pain.

CRYOTHERAPY

Cryotherapy (Cold therapy) is a very important part of pain control after surgery. The cold temperature will help control swelling and reduce pain. This can be done several ways – with an ice pack or a cold therapy unit.

Cold therapy units (Ice Machines) are more effective in concentrating the cold to the surgical site via a molded wrap. Cold water is then circulated through the wrap, delivering cold to all sides of the joint.

These Ice machines (Ice Man CLEAR3) are typically not covered by insurance and are available for purchase through our office at any ProSports location.

WOUND CARE

The bandage on your wound is a waterproof dressing. You may get it wet and shower after 24 hours. The bandage should be removed after 14 days. Dermabond skin glue and absorbable sutures were used to close the shoulder incisions so NO STITCHES NEED TO BE REMOVED.



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There may be a small amount of bleeding and/or fluid leaking at the surgical site. This is normal. The shoulder is filled with fluid during surgery, sometimes causing leakage for 24-36 hours. You may change or reinforce the bandage as needed.

Use Ice / Cryocuff / Ice Man as often as possible for the first 3-4 days, then as needed for pain relief. Do not wrap the wound too thickly or the Cryocuff cold may not penetrate as well.

There will actually be more swelling on days 1-3 than you had the day of surgery. This is normal. The swelling is decreased by using the Ice / Cryocuff / Ice Man.

Do not soak the shoulder in water. Do not go swimming in the pool or ocean until your follow-up appointment.

DRIVING RESTRICTIONS

****IMPORTANT** - ABSOLUTELY NO DRIVING WHILE TAKING ANY NARCOTIC PAIN MEDICATION (VICODIN / PERCOCET / DARVOCET, etc.) - it is against the law to operate a motor vehicle under the influence of any controlled substances (even when legally prescribed). Narcotics impair both motor ability and judgment.**

As a result of your surgery, your reaction time will be greatly slowed down, impairing your physical ability to safely drive a vehicle. Thus in the case an emergency arises – i.e. you need to slam on breaks, depress the clutch, or turn the wheel, you may not be able to do so quickly – thus potentially risking harm to yourself or others.

If your **RIGHT SHOULDER** is the operative side, you **MAY NOT DRIVE FOR 6 WEEKS**. It is important to regain adequate muscle strength and control before attempting to shift gears or use the steering wheel.

If your **LEFT SHOULDER** is the operative side, you may drive a few days **AFTER** you finish taking your pain medication. It is important that you feel very confident in your ability to respond efficiently before attempting to drive. **NO** opening of the driver's side door with the operative arm. You may stabilize the steering wheel between 6-7 o'clock.

Data shows that driving performance is impaired for at least 6 weeks postoperatively, with a return to normal driving by 12 weeks.



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FOLLOW-UP

Please call the office to schedule a 2-week follow-up appointment after surgery

CHECKLIST

- Identify a Caregiver/family member to help with preparing meals, hygiene, dressing, and activities of daily living (cleaning, shopping, writing bills, etc).
- Identify a Caregiver/family member to assist in driving you to and from appointments.
- Make your post-op Physical Therapy consult shortly after surgery to guarantee an appointment. PT should begin 4 weeks post-op (you will receive the Physical Therapy Prescription at your post-op appointment).
- Make your Follow-up Appointment 2 weeks after surgery

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CALL OUR OFFICE 617-738-8642