

Shoulder Post-Surgery Instructions Revised 3/27/20 Rask

Bandage. Immediately after surgery, there will be a bulky white bandage on your shoulder. Keep it clean and dry, and do not change it. It will be changed by the nurse at your first post-op visit after 3-4 days.

Bathing. You may take a bath with the bandage above the water level and wash around it. If you shower, keep the spray away from the bandage. Do not get the bandage wet.

Immobilizer. The shoulder immobilizer is required to prevent too much shoulder motion which could cause the internal stitches of your repair to break. The time it is required will vary, usually 4-6 weeks. The immobilizer must be on at all times except you *may* remove it under the following conditions:

1. Change clothes
2. Bathing
3. While awake in controlled environment if you keep your arm within 6 inches of torso. The 6 inches is the distance from your elbow tip to the side of your body. It includes an arc of 6 inches forward, backward or straight out to the side. You must have the immobilizer on in bed.

Activity. You may use the surgical side arm for light activities as long as you keep arm within 6 inches of your torso and no more than 12 ounces of stress (lift, push, pull). For example, eating, hygiene, use of computer, driving. For exercise, after 3 days, you may ride a stationary bike, walk (not run), or use an elliptical trainer. Sweating within 3 days of surgery may increase risk of infection. Move elbow frequently throughout the day, e.g., 10 times, 3 times/day. You'll need to at least remove the wrist strap part of the immobilizer for elbow motion.

Driving. You may drive an automatic transmission vehicle if you don't take a narcotic medication within 4 hours, keep your arm within the required 6 inches from your torso, and have good control of the vehicle.

After Completion of Immobilizer Use

After completion of the immobilizer, usually after 4-6 weeks, you will start physical therapy and need to start moving your arm. A prescription for therapy will be given at an office visit shortly before the time you need to start. Your restrictions after discontinuing the immobilizer are:

1. 2 lb stress limit (lift, push, pull)
2. No sudden, jerky motions. All motions should be slow and controlled. There is no limit on how *far* to move your arm, only a limit on how *fast* to move it. Do not be concerned about snaps, crackles and pops in your shoulder, this is just scar tissue breaking up and is beneficial.