



ARLINGTON ORTHOPEDICS

Shoulder Arthroscopy FAQ's Frequently Asked Questions

❖ **Can I Take a Shower?**

- If you have white tape on your shoulder, you may remove the dressing and take a shower.
- If you have a clear dressing over your incision, you may remove it 2 days after surgery
- You may allow the shoulder to get wet, but do not allow the water to hit you directly on the incisions. No immersion in the water is allowed until 21 days post op. This means no soaking in a bathtub, hot tub, whirlpool, or swimming in a pool or ocean!

❖ **Can I Drive?** You are not permitted to drive while you are taking narcotic pain medications. We do not recommend that you drive while the sling is required. Once you have been instructed that the sling is no longer required, you must wait until you have adequate strength and range of motion to drive. We recommend you test you driving ability in an empty parking lot with supervision until you determine whether or not you can drive safely.

❖ **When Do I Start Therapy?** If therapy is necessary, it will usually begin sometime after your first post-operative visit. Your surgeon will inform of your physical therapy start date during your first post operative visit. Therapy can be done anywhere that is convenient and paid for by your insurance. A list of facilities is available.

❖ **Do I Need the Sling/ Immobilizer?** In most cases, the sling/ immobilizer is used to protect your arm in the early stages after surgery and is required. If your procedure does not require the use of the sling/ immobilizer you will receive specific instructions.

- ❖ **Do I Need Pain Medication?** Most patients use narcotic pain medication for several days following surgery, and then change over to Tylenol or Advil/Aleve. It is not unusual to require pain medicine at night for a longer period of time. The use of ice may reduce the need for medication. We recommend that you use ice for no more than 20 minutes with at least one hour between applications. Do NOT take routine anti-inflammatory medicines (Aleve / Advil) if you have had a repair.
- ❖ **I Can't Sleep Because My Arm Hurts!** The pain is usually worse at night and sleeping is often difficult. It is difficult to find a comfortable position in bed and many people sleep in a recliner for several days or even weeks following surgery. It helps to take pain medication one hour before bedtime.
- ❖ **What Things CAN I Do?** For the first 2 weeks following surgery, you should remain in the sling at all times except to shower. You may also be out if your sling to do pendulum exercises with your shoulder and range of motion exercises with your elbow. For the elbow exercises, your arm should remain against your body. If you happen to do something that made the shoulder hurt, don't panic! You probably overdid it. Use ice and rest.
- ❖ **What Things Should I NEVER Do?** For the first 2 weeks you should not do any active movements with the shoulder. When you begin therapy after your first post-op visit, you will be given instructions as to your progression of activities. Please remember that there is some discomfort involved with therapy! Protect your incisions with sun block from 3 weeks post op until 6 months post op. If you have had a repair, do not lift, carry, push or pull anything greater than 10 lbs until 4 months post op.
- ❖ **My Shoulder Hurts! I Thought I Would Be Better By Now!** Most people's expectations following shoulder arthroscopy are that they will be back to normal in a few days. This is not what most people experience. Most people notice that they are back to normal around 8-16 weeks. Even though there are only a few small incisions, there was a significant amount of work that was done inside the shoulder. The shoulder can be stiff and sore for several weeks and you can expect some discomfort. Please do not judge the effectiveness of the surgery until after you have given yourself ample time to recover from the surgery!
- ❖ **When Will My Appointment Be?** Routine post op appointments occur at 8-14 days after surgery for stitch removal to evaluate the incisions and remove sutures if present. We will arrange physical therapy, if necessary, during that visit. Your future visits will be discussed with you as well and your next appointment will be scheduled at this time.