

**Shoulder Surgery Discharge Instructions**

**Medications**

A prescription for pain medicine, nausea medication and an antibiotic will be given to you before you leave the hospital. The antibiotics will be taken for 3 days unless indicated otherwise. The nausea and pain medication should be taken as directed as needed. Depending on the surgery, you may also be told to take 325mg of aspirin daily for 30 days or be given a blood thinner. Aspirin acts as a blood thinner that decreases the risk of a blood clot in the deep veins of the legs called a DVT, which can sometimes occur after surgery due to decreased activity.

You may need to take a stool softener twice daily while taking pain medicine. (ex: Colace 100 mg) Pain medicine can slow down the bowels causing constipation.

Do not drink alcoholic beverages for 24 hours. Drink plenty of fluids. Resume a regular diet by eating light foods and advance as tolerated. Drink 6-8 glasses of fluids each day.

Do not drive or operate heavy machinery for 24 hours, or while you are taking pain medication.

Effects of the nerve block will last around 12-48 hours. This may cause tingling/numbness/weakness or feeling like your arm is asleep. Effects of general anesthesia may last up to 48 hours. You may have episodes of drowsiness, nausea or dizziness. These feelings are normal.

**Wound and dressing care**

Draining from the incision(s) in the first week is normal. Keep dressing clean, dry and intact. You may remove the outer (white) dressing on the 2nd day after surgery. Remove the old bandage, clean with soap and water, pat the incision(s) dry with a clean towel and replace the bandage with a clean bandage or a regular Band-Aid. Leave xeroform dressing intact or any other dressing directly over the incision. Do not apply any lotions or ointment directly to the incision site. Shower only-do not submerge the incision sites in a hot tub, bathtub or swimming pool.

Place a rubber ball or small beach ball under your arm to keep abducted 45 degrees from the body during showers and dressing changes. Do not lift your arm out from your body without assistance. Have somebody assist you in washing your upper body.

**Activity**

If you have an abduction sling placed after surgery, you will need to stay in it for 4-6 weeks. The sling must be worn at all times except for physical therapy and showering until you are told otherwise by Dr. Parker or staff. The purpose of the abduction sling is to hold your arm away from your body without using your shoulder muscles. This takes the tension off the surgical site, giving your repair to heal. The therapist may lift your arm out of the sling and your family member may lift it to help you get dressed, but you should not lift it yourself as this will cause tension on the surgical site.

If you have a regular sling placed after surgery, you may wear it at your discretion for comfort.

Most patients find it more comfortable to sleep in a recliner to keep your shoulder elevated.

You may move your hand, wrist and elbow in the sling so they do not get stiff, but absolutely NO lifting, pushing, pulling, heavy lifting or exercise with your affected arm until released from Dr. Parker or staff.

**Cryotherapy/Ice bags**

A re-circulating ice water pad may be applied to your dressing after surgery. It consists of a thin, flexible pad with a bladder inside. A tube coming from the bladder connects to a small cooler which allows ice water to circulate through it once the cooler is filled with ice water and is plugged into a wall outlet. There should always be a layer of dressing or thin towel between the pad and the skin to prevent frostbite. We recommend using the unit for the first 2 days continuously, then 6-8 hours per day afterwards. Using the cryotherapy unit will reduce swelling and pain. If the unit is not covered by your insurance, you may discuss payment arrangements with our DME representative. It is not required, but highly recommended. If you are unable to use the cryotherapy unit, use ice packs continuously for 48 hours, then as needed.

**Continuous Passive Motion Chair (CPM)**

A shoulder CPM chair may be recommended for certain shoulder procedures. Arrangements will be made with our DME representative for delivery and pick-up if this is needed for your surgery. The chair is designed for you to sit in and moves your arm and shoulder for you. We recommend using the CPM chair 6-8 hours per day. Our rep will provide instructions for use. The chair is very effective at improving flexibility and decreasing pain. If the chair is not covered by your insurance, you may discuss payment arrangements with our DME rep. It is not required, but highly recommended. For questions specific to the CPM, please call Britkare directly.

**Physical Therapy**

It is very important to start therapy ASAP after surgery and attend 2-3 times a week as instructed. An appointment should be made for you upon discharge and that information will be in your discharge paperwork. If the therapy facility is closed when you are discharged from the hospital, you will be given instructions to call and schedule your appointment with the physical therapist. PLEASE remember to take your therapy prescription to your first visit as it will have specific instructions on it for the physical therapist.

If you do not know who to use for PT, here are a few options in Amarillo:

* Parker Sports Medicine
* Quail Creek Physical Therapy
* BSA Outpatient PT
* Northwest Outpatient PT
* Total Physical Therapy
* If you live outside of Amarillo, please use the nearest facility to your hometown.

Do frequent foot flaps or pumps 30 times every hour while awake for the first 2 days to help increase circulation. Be sure to walk with assistance for the first few days if needed, especially after taking pain medication. Walking short distances will speed up your recovery.

**Follow up appointment**

You will have a follow-up appt 10-14 days after surgery. In most cases, this appointment was made when your surgery was scheduled. Please call 806-350-2663 to confirm appt details if needed.

**Returning to work/school**

As a general rule, we recommend taking off work at least until your follow-up appointment. You will be given a note to excuse you from work/school on the day of your surgery. If you would like to return to work before your follow-up appointment, please contact our office and make arrangements.

If you are a student, it is up to the discretion, within reason, of you and your parents on how long you will be out of school. Usually, 2-3 days is typical but special considerations may be made on case-by-case basis. However, no PE or Sports until released by Dr. Parker or staff.

**Call our office or go to the Emergency Room if...**

* **You have a fever of 101 or higher, night sweats or chills.**
* **You notice red streaks radiating outwards from your incision(s).**
* **Your incision(s) get worsening redness, swelling, draining pus or severe pain.**
* **You experience shortness of breath or severe pain in your calf (signs of a blood clot)**
* **You have any questions, do not hesitate to call our office.**