

## **Dr. Allen Shoulder Arthroplasty Post-Op Instructions**

### **Dressings**

Keep your dressings in place for at least 1 week post-op. The dressing over your incision is called an Aquacel, it is waterproof and ok to leave on to shower. Do not soak your surgical site. Let warm soapy water run over your shoulder and pat dry with a clean towel. Make sure to keep your arm resting at your side when out of the sling. Do not use your operative arm for washing and do not reach above your head or behind your back. After 1 week the Aquacel dressing can be removed and replaced with clean, fresh gauze. Make sure to wash your hands before touching the skin around your incision. Keep the wound covered until your first follow up. There is glue over your incision, this will flake off over time. Do not pick at or remove any scabs. It is ok to lotion the skin surrounding the incision, but don't place any lotion or ointment directly on the wound.

### **Sling/Shoulder Immobilizer**

You will be in a shoulder immobilizer for around 4 weeks after surgery. This is to protect the soft tissue repair while it heals. Make sure to wear the immobilizer at all times except hygiene and your exercises. Sleep in the immobilizer. When out of the shoulder sling make sure to keep your arm within the range of motion restrictions. Button up shirts will be easier to slip on and off for the first several weeks after surgery. Make sure to move your elbow, wrist, and fingers several times every day to prevent stiffness.

### **Motion**

Make sure to not push yourself up out of a chair with the operative arm and do not let the arm extend behind your back. Rule of thumb is you should always be able to see your elbow. When lying flat, place a towel behind your arm to keep it from extending out of view

### **Pain Control**

Pain control is a very important aspect of your recovery. It is well documented that multimodal pain control is the most effective way to manage post-operative

pain. At the end of the procedure, I will inject local anesthetic into the surgical field, additionally the anesthesiologist may give you an upper extremity block. These blocks can last anywhere for a few hours to a couple days. The goal is to have little to no pain in the immediate post-operative period. You will also receive a short prescription for narcotic pain medications. This is to be used for break through pain. Combining the narcotic pain medications with Tylenol and Ibuprofen has been shown to give superior pain relief compared to the narcotic alone. The goal is to use the narcotic pain medications sparingly, and discontinue its use by 2-3 weeks post-op. If you are running low and will require a refill, please plan in advance, as refills on the weekend are often not logistically possible. Ice and elevation for the first several days after your surgery will also help control your pain.

### **Nausea**

Nausea after surgery and anesthesia is not uncommon. You may receive an anti-nausea medication prescription for use at your discretion.

### **Constipation**

Narcotic pain medications can be very constipating. You will receive a stool softening medication. I recommend you take it as long as you are taking the narcotics. Make sure to drink plenty of water as well in the immediate post-operative period.

### **Physical Therapy**

You should have meet with the Physical Therapist pre-operatively to learn the exercises for your rehabilitation. Start these exercises the first day after surgery. Generally, you will follow up with PT within the couple days after surgery. Therapy is an essential aspect to regain function and strength after shoulder arthroplasty.

### **Follow Up**

Typically, your first follow up is about 2 weeks after surgery. We will assess your wound and likely remove your sutures at this time. We will review your surgery and ensure you have upcoming therapy visits arranged if needed.