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Sternoclavicular Joint Reconstruction Instructions

Dane Todd, MD

1. **Ice** the shoulder for at least 72 hours after surgery.
2. **Pain Control** – You will be sent home with a prescription for pain medication. Take it according to the instructions on the prescription. Pain can cause constipation, so be sure to drink plenty of fluids and use an over the counter stool softener (i.e. Miralax) to help prevent this. You may take Tylenol (acetaminophen) instead of the prescribed medication. However, make sure you do not take more than 3,000 milligrams (3 grams) of Tylenol (acetaminophen) in any 24 hour period. Wean off the pain medications as soon as possible after surgery.
3. **Dressings** – Keep your dressings on until your follow up appointment. You may shower with the dressings in place. If the dressing becomes soiled or comes off: remove it and cover the incision with gauze and tape. Your sutures are beneath the skin and will dissolve.
4. **Showering** – You may shower the day after surgery. Pat your dressing dry. Do NOT take a bath or submerge your wound under water (i.e. pools, hot tub).
5. **Sling** – Wear your sling at all times (especially when you sleep). Remove the sling 3 times daily to perform elbow range of motion, which your therapist will show you. Please perform hand and wrist range of motion frequently as this helps relieve swelling and discomfort. Your sling will be worn for 6 weeks post-operatively.
6. **Arm Position** – **NO shoulder Extension and External rotation.** This position puts you at risk of dislocating. When laying down, keep a pillow behind the elbow to avoid shoulder extension.
7. **Lifting** – do not lift any objects with the surgical arm. **Do not use the surgical arm to push off from a chair or to pull yourself up from a seated position.**
8. **Driving** – You may not return to driving until you are off all pain medications and feel comfortable driving. You should leave yourself extra room, as your reaction time will be slowed.