



Ellen Ervin
(1961-2012)

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POST OPERATIVE PATIENT INFORMATION ACROMIOCLAVICULAR JOINT RECONSTRUCTION

PROCEDURE

The dislocated collarbone (clavicle) will be put back in place and held in position with a screw or special suture.

PAIN

Dr. Higgins has a very particular routine to help make you comfortable (not necessarily pain free) after surgery. This includes prescription medicine, over the counter medication and ice. You will be given prescriptions for medication that will help control pain, nausea, inflammation and infection. You will also be asked to take over the counter medication for pain control. Medication should be taken as directed on the calendar that will be given to you at your preoperative appointment. The Cold Therapy Unit, alternative system, or ice bags should be worn continuously the first day and through the night for the first few weeks. This will help reduce pain and swelling. Please do not place ice directly on your skin. There should be a layer between the ice and your skin. It is important to take the ice off and move your shoulder starting the second day after surgery.

BANDAGE

Steri-strips, Band-Aids and a bulky soft bandage will be placed on your shoulder. They will soak up any blood or fluid that may seep from the incisions. If there is a lot of drainage on the bandage, you may change it. You may take the bandage, NOT the Band-Aids or Steri-strips, off the day after surgery or wait for your physical therapy appointment. The feeling of water in your shoulder is normal. It is left over water from the surgery. Some of this water may leak from the incisions and your body will absorb the rest. Band-Aids may be changed as needed after the first three days following surgery but never use Neosporin on the incisions.

WOUNDS

The incision may be sore and you may develop bruising in the arm and trunk over the first several days following surgery. This will go away and no special care is needed. Steri-strips and a Band-Aid will be placed over the incision and will fall off by themselves.

BATHING

It is safe to shower approximately 24 hours after surgery. Your skin will have a sticky, orange substance on it from the cleansing solution used during surgery. This can be removed by using rubbing alcohol. To bathe, remove the sling, use your other hand to support the arm under the elbow as needed. You **DO NOT** need to cover the incision or the Band-Aids with plastic wrap. The surgical area **MAY** get wet, wash with regular soap and water, and pat the Band-Aids dry. Please purchase a box of cloth or waterproof Band-Aids if the Band-Aids require replacement. Your physical therapist will direct you about changing Band-Aids.

ACTIVITY

A sling is necessary to support the arm the day of surgery. The sling may be removed the next day. If you are going to be in a large public gathering, you should wear your sling. This is to protect you from being jostled, grabbed or patted on the shoulder by folks you may see. It is also a good idea to have your arm in a sling for the first week if you are going to be walking for greater than a few hours. When in your home, remove your sling and move the arm. You should open and close your hand to reduce the swelling. You may also bend and straighten your elbow and wrist to reduce stiffness. The shoulder should only be moved according to the instructions from your physical therapist. It is safe to write, eat, and drive with your operated arm as long as there is no pain. Pain should be your guide; do not try to work through it. Do not carry anything weighing over 5 lbs with your operated arm. You will start physical therapy the day after surgery.

PHYSICAL THERAPY

The physical therapists will let you know when to decrease the frequency of your physical therapy visits as you progress through the rehabilitation. You will be given exercises to do at home starting at your first visit and will be progressed as you continue through the rehabilitation. Your compliance with the home exercise program is essential to the desired outcome and successful results of your surgery. Your attendance at physical therapy is also essential to a successful outcome.

PRECAUTIONS

If you have a fever over 101, severe pain or redness in your shoulder, please call the office at 301-232-1050. If it is after hours, please call 240-401-0019. Swelling, some drainage and redness are normal.

FOLLOW UP

Your appointment to see Dr. Higgins or Kristine has been made for about 1 week after your surgery. Please refer to your preoperative instruction letter for the date and time. If you have misplaced those instructions, please contact our office at 301-232-1050.