



Ellen Ervin
(1961-2012)

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POST OPERATIVE PATIENT INFORMATION SHOULDER ARTHROPLASTY (TOTAL SHOULDER)

PROCEDURE

Your operation will be done through an incision in the front of your shoulder. The damaged ball and socket will be replaced as needed. You may go home the same day of surgery or you may spend one night in the hospital.

PAIN

Dr. Higgins has a very particular routine to help make you comfortable (not necessarily pain free) after surgery. This routine includes over the counter medication, prescription medication and ice. You will be given prescriptions for medicine 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 visit. Please take all of the antibiotic medication. The Cold Therapy System, alternative system or ice bags should be worn continuously for the first day and through the night for the first few weeks after surgery. Please be sure to have a layer, such as the bandage, between your skin and the ice, avoiding direct exposure of the cold to your skin. It will be important for you to take the ice off and move the shoulder throughout the day in order to regain motion and function. Ice for approximately 30-60 minutes at a time and then remove ice to move the shoulder as able with pain being your guide. The icing will help reduce pain and swelling. Some patients may go home with a pain control infusion pump. This is a device that has a small catheter which is placed inside the joint, attached to a syringe filled with an anesthetic, or numbing medicine. You do not need to push any buttons or manipulate this device at all. It will automatically deliver the appropriate dose of medication over the 48 hours following surgery. Either you or the physical therapist may remove the catheter when the syringe is empty.

BANDAGE

A soft bandage has been placed on your shoulder. It will soak up any blood or fluid that may seep from the wound. If there is a lot of drainage on the bandage, it may be changed the night of surgery or the physical therapist will change it at your initial evaluation the day after surgery. When removing the bandage, be very careful not to accidentally remove the pain control catheter

if there is medication remaining in the syringe. Please purchase a box of cloth or waterproof Band-Aids to be used to replace Band-Aids when appropriate as discussed with the physical therapists.

WOUNDS

The incisions may be sore and some swelling and bruising may develop over the first few days following surgery. This will go away and no special care is needed. Steristrips will be placed over the incisions and will fall off by themselves or will be removed as needed by your physical therapist. Band-Aids may be changed as needed after the first few days after surgery but never use Neosporin on the incisions.

BATHING

It is safe to bathe 24 hours after surgery. Your skin will have a sticky orange substance on it from the cleansing solution used in surgery. This can be removed by using rubbing alcohol. To bathe, remove the sling but not the dressing. Use your other hand to support the arm under the elbow, and wash with regular soap and water. A large Band-Aid is all that is needed to cover the wound. Keep the original bandage from your surgery on and your physical therapist will replace it the first time. After that, we ask that you provide your own 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 will be out in a crowd or out for an extended period of time over the first few days after surgery, please wear the sling. It will protect you from others who may bump into you but also you do not want to let your arm hang for a prolonged period for the first few days until the proper muscles are working to support this motion. You should open and close your hand repeatedly to help reduce swelling. You may also bend and straighten your elbow and move your wrist up and down 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. If a motion is painful, do not try to work through the pain. Do not carry anything weighting over 5 lbs. with you operated arm. You will begin physical therapy the day after surgery. Please see your surgery letter for the date and time. If you have misplaced your letter please contact our office at 301-232-1050.

PRECAUTIONS

If you have a fever over 101, severe pains, or redness on your shoulder, please contact 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 James has been made for about 1 week after your surgery. Please refer to your surgery letter for date and time. If you have misplaced this letter, please contact our office at 301-232-1050.