

Arthroscopic
Subacromial
Decompression:
Post-Op Shoulder Care
Home Instructions



(Do not give to RC repairs, Bankart repairs, or SLAP repairs)

1. Ice should be used 4-5 times/day for 15-20 min. for the first 2 weeks, and then as needed for pain or swelling. If pain catheter in place, avoid placing ice over flow valve, or wait until this has been removed to start ice regimen. A homemade reusable ice pack can be made using: 1 bottle rubbing alcohol and 2 bottles of water in a gallon zip loc freezer bag (double bag in case of leaks). The alcohol prevents the water from freezing solid and the ice pack can be molded around the shoulder. Always keep one layer of fabric between your skin and any ice pack.
2. Follow up in our office in 3-5 days for a dressing change and to have your pain catheter removed. For those who live out of town, you can arrange to have this done at your local doctor's office.
3. Follow up for suture removal and progress check in 10-15 days.
4. A prescription for pain medication will be provided. Please inform us if you have had any intolerance to these types of medications or if you have any allergies to medications. Do not operate machinery, drive, or make any important business or personal decisions while taking these medications. Take with food to help avoid nausea, and take a stool softener to help avoid problems with constipation (e.g. Colace, Senakot, Metamucil, and Milk or Magnesia). If you need refills, call during business hours.
5. Wear the shoulder immobilizer or arm sling for 1-2 weeks. You may take it off to shower, bathe, or sleep. You may stop using this as soon as you feel comfortable without it, unless otherwise instructed by your surgeon.
6. You may shower after your dressing has been changed and after drainage from your wounds has stopped. Avoid submersion in water, e.g. bath, hot tub, swimming pool, etc for 1-2 days after sutures have been removed.
7. Begin exercise on the evening of surgery following the instructions on the back of the sheet. It is important to regain shoulder motion as fast as possible. Try to restore motion while the pain catheter is still functioning. Your goal is to have full motion in your shoulder when you follow up for suture removal. Use slow careful movement in a controlled manner. It is okay to use passive (someone moves your shoulder for you), active assist (you help move it with your opposite hand), or active range of motion techniques (you move it under the power of your own arm muscles). We recommend starting with shoulder pendulum exercises followed by the shoulder blade pinching and shoulder rolls the first day or two, and then progressing to the cane exercises. Perform these 3x/day.
8. Please call your surgeon if you develop a fever (101 degrees or above) or have any other problems or questions.