



Jaicharan Iyengar, M.D.
Stockton Shoulder Institute @
Alpine Orthopaedic Medical Group
2488 N. California Street
Stockton, CA 95204
Phone (209) 946-7213
www.stocktonshoulder.com

Shoulder/Elbow Fracture Repair Post-Operative Instructions:

GENERAL

- To allow healing of the soft tissue, you should wear the sling (and sling pillow if necessary) at **ALL** times, except for therapy exercises.
- While sleeping, you should prop the arm and shoulder on a pillow for stability and comfort. (When lying on your back, you should be able to visualize your elbow. This ensures you are not extending your shoulder past neutral.)
- Sling should be worn continuously for **3-4 weeks**.
- If you do not have a cold therapy machine, use ice packs on the surgical site 20 minutes per hour while awake to reduce inflammation and pain.
- Restore active range of motion (AROM) of elbow/wrist/hand. You should do exercises to move **ONLY** your **elbow, wrist, and fingers** at least 3 times per day starting immediately after surgery (including ball-squeezing exercises).
- **Avoid** moving your shoulder during these exercises.
- Moving your elbow/wrist/hand actively early in the recovery process helps to avoid pain and will ultimately decrease pain and stiffness in the arm.
- You may resume daily activities, with modifications, while always maintaining the stability of the replaced joint.

MEDICATIONS

- Start taking pain medication when you get home from the hospital and then continue to take them **every 4-6 hours** as needed to control the pain.
- It is best to **prevent** post-operative pain by using your medications on a regular basis for the first 24-48 hours after surgery, then tapering off.
- Be sure to take a stool softener (Docusate or "Colace") as prescribed to prevent constipation while you are taking narcotics, as this is a **common side effect**.
- If you experience nausea after surgery, use the medication ondansetron ("Zofran") as prescribed, until it resolves, typically within 48 hours of surgery.
- Start taking a dose of Aspirin 81mg (1 tablet) by mouth **twice** daily starting the day after your shoulder replacement for 30 days, to avoid the risk of serious blood clots from forming.
- Take Aspirin **with food** to avoid stomach irritation.
- **Stop** taking Aspirin if you experience severe stomach pains or bleeding in your stools and call Dr. Iyengar's office immediately.
- Dr. Iyengar may have you stop taking this medication after the first post-operative appointment if your overall risk of blood clots is low and your mobility has improved.

SHOWER

- You may give yourself a “sponge bath” on post-operative day 3.
- Keep your surgical dressings **clean and dry**.
- Remove your sling **carefully** making sure to not actively move the shoulder joint and cover the dressings so they do not get wet.
- If you happen to get the surgical dressings wet, simply remove the dressings, pat the incision dry, and then place clean gauze dressing over wound.
- Do **not** lift the surgical arm over your head, but you may lift enough to wash the armpit.
- Do **not** put any creams, lotions, or antibiotic ointments on the wound.
- You may lift arm **gently** to put apply underarm deodorant.
- Put your arm back into the sling **gently** after your sponge bath.

POST-OPERATIVE VISIT

- You will have your 1st post-operative visit **10 to 14 days after surgery**.
- At this visit, we will remove the adhesive dressings and inspect the surgical wounds on your shoulder incision.
- You will be given your post-operative prescription from Dr. Iyengar to start Physical Therapy with all of the guidelines for your therapist to follow.
- We will review your x-rays to show you what was done at your surgery.

PRECAUTIONS

- **Avoid** shoulder active range of motion until otherwise instructed.
- **No** lifting of objects.
- **No** excessive shoulder motion behind the back.
- **No** excessive stretching or sudden movements, especially reaching.
- **No** supporting of body weight by hand on involved side.
- **No** driving for 3 weeks.
- Keep incision clean and dry (**OK to shower after 2 weeks but no soaking!**).

CONTACT OUR OFFICE IF:

- You are not sure how to best use the pain medications, please call for a “**Pain Protocol**”.
- You **do not** have a follow-up appointment, please call the appointment desk at **(209) 946-7200** in the first weekday after surgery to schedule.
- Any signs of infection (**increased swelling, redness, drainage from the incisions, warmth, fever, chills, or severe pain unrelieved by pain medications**).
- Any signs of a blood clot such as swelling/redness in the calves, shortness/difficulty breathing or loss of arm circulation.