



**LOURDES MEDICAL ASSOCIATES**  
**PROFESSIONAL ORTHOPAEDICS**  
**SPORTS MEDICINE & ARTHROSCOPY**

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## POSTOP INSTRUCTIONS FOR OPEN SHOULDER SURGERY

### **Postoperative Instructions**

You will wake up in the operating room with a sling in place. You will go to the recovery room at the hospital and then to a private room (often on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor) after a few hours. You can get out of bed when you wish. You should continue to apply ice to your shoulder to reduce pain and swelling.

Pain is usually controlled for the first 24 hours with intravenous narcotic medications through a patient controlled anesthesia (PCA) machine. This machine delivers the pain medication to you when you push a button. Afterwards you will be transitioned to oral pain medications such as oxycontin and oxycodone.

While a blood transfusion is rare, it is occasionally necessary. You may discuss donating your own blood in advance so it can be given to you should you require a transfusion after surgery.

You may be discharged home on either the first or second postoperative day. You will need someone to assist you at home, so family should be aware that you will need help with simple daily living chores such as dressing, cooking, and feeding yourself. In some instances it is necessary to go to a supervised rehabilitation facility for a period of time until you can begin effectively using your arm.

### **Activities and advice for in the hospital and while at home:**

1. Please call with any concerns: (609) 747-9200
2. Apply ice to the shoulder, as it will be quite helpful. After two days, you can change the dressing to a smaller one to allow the cold to better get to the shoulder. Be sure to leave the little pieces of tape (steri-strips) in place.
3. Remove the sling on the first day after surgery. Move your elbow, wrist, hand and finger several times a day. Begin the pendulum exercises several times a day. Put the sling back on when you're done with these exercises.



4. After two days it is okay to shower but do not get the wound wet for at least two weeks after surgery. Do not submerge the wound as you would in a bathtub or hot tub for at least 4 weeks after surgery. To wash under your operated arm bend over at the waist and let the arm passively swing away from the body. It is safe to wash under the arm in this position.
5. After shoulder surgery there is a variable amount of pain and swelling. This will dissipate after several days. Continue to take the pain medicine you were prescribed as needed. Remember it is called pain control, not pain elimination.
6. It is important to look out of signs of infection following joint replacement surgery. These can include: fever (temperature  $> 101.5^{\circ}$ , chills, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, redness around your incision, or yellow or green drainage from your incision. Should any of these be present please contact Dr. Mc Millan's office immediately.
7. You will have an office visit scheduled approximately 10-14 days after your surgery

## REHABILITATION AFTER SHOULDER SURGERY

The following exercises are for your comfort in the immediate postoperative period. Dr. Mc Millan will arrange for your physical therapy and you will be given a prescription at your postoperative visit.

### Activities:

1. Use your sling during this period. When you are at home and not moving it is okay to come out of the sling as long as you are careful and keep the shoulder safe. Your elbow should be "tucked in" to your side whenever you are out of your sling. Put the sling on when you are outside or in a crowd. Keep the sling on when sleeping at night for the first 4 weeks.
2. You may use the hand on your operated arm as long as you do not rotate your shoulder away from your body. You should bend your arm at the elbow and use your fingers and hand such as to reach up and touch your face. Keep your elbow in front of you.
3. You may shower as previously described. Do not submerge the wound under water.
4. Begin the phase one exercises. Supine exercises should be done with a small rolled towel placed behind the elbow to avoid shoulder hyperextension and anterior capsular stretch.
5. Continue to use your ice: 7 days per week, 4-5 times per day, 15-20 minutes per time
6. You will see Dr. Mc Millan at 7-10 days after surgery and again at 6 weeks after surgery.

### Exercises:



#### *Pendulum exercise*

Remove your sling, bend over at the waist and let the arm hang down. Using your body to initiate movement, swing the arm gently forward and backward and in a circular motion.

You should also do simple passive motion of the elbow, and active motion of the wrist and hand in order to help reduce swelling. The physical and occupational therapists will teach you about this during your inpatient stay. Please keep doing these at least three times per day while at home or in rehab.