

The Shoulder Clinic of Idaho

Dr. Thomas Chopp

POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR SHOULDER SURGERY

It is our goal that your shoulder surgery be as pleasant as possible with regards to pain management and recovery of shoulder function.

Your shoulder surgery has been performed using an arthroscope through several small incisions, or for shoulder replacement, 1 larger incision. A long acting local anesthetic, called an "Interscalene Block" may have been used to help you with pain control. This block may not completely wear off for up to 24 hours. Some of the side effects that you may experience from the block once you are at home are:

- 1) Mild difficulty swallowing.
- 2) Hoarseness
- 3) Feeling like it is hard to "catch your breath"
- 4) Tingling Fingers

These symptoms usually subside in about 24-48 hours. If you feel like any of these symptoms need medical attention please call 323-4747 or go to the hospital.

PAIN MANAGEMENT

An ice machine, called a Polar Pack, has been ordered for your use. (Please see attached yellow sheet) It is beneficial to begin using this as soon as your block wears off. Place a wash cloth or towel between your skin and the polar pack. You may use the Polar Pack as often as you wish for up to an hour with a 20 minute break for two weeks. Please return the Polar Pack unit at you first post-op visit.

It is also very important to begin taking your pain pills before your block wears off. I suggest taking 1 pain pill with food every 4 hours, increasing to 2 as needed after your block has worn off. You may add Advil, Ibuprofen, Motrin or Aleve to supplement your pain medication (unless you have a fracture, ulcers, or take coumadin). Remember to also begin using stool softeners or Milk of Magnesia to avoid constipation while taking narcotics.

For the first 2 to 4 weeks you will probably sleep more comfortably in a recliner with pillows behind the elbow for support.

HYGEINE

If you have undergone an arthroscopic procedure, you may remove all dressings after 5 days and shower. Place bandages over small incision sites after showering. This may be modified to your specific surgery.

If you have had a shoulder replacement you may shower on the 3rd day with a plastic cover over your dressing. Keep the hospital dressing on for 7 days and then remove. You may then shower uncovered. Please apply a light dressing to keep the sutures from becoming irritated.

MOTION

Physical therapy may be started soon after surgery or a few weeks following, depending on your surgical procedure. The emphasis is on range of motion for the first several weeks. Strengthening will be started at a later date. Each patient will have a physical therapy program *personalized* to their procedure. We emphasize a close working relationship with you and your physical therapist throughout your recovery.

SLING

Please wear your sling (except when showering) until directed otherwise.

DRIVING

Driving is not allowed while in sling.

Once again, our goal is for you to have a pleasant and successful surgical experience. Please call 323-4747 with any questions or concerns.