



## Total Shoulder Arthroplasty Postoperative Instructions

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**PLEASE READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS COMPLETELY AND ASK FOR CLARIFICATION IF NECESSARY - DIRECT QUESTIONS TO YOUR NURSE BEFORE LEAVING THE SURGERY CENTER OR VIA PHONE/EMAIL TO DR BODEN'S STAFF AFTER ARRIVING HOME**

### Wound Care

- Loosen bandage if swelling or progressive numbness occurs in the extremity.
- It is normal for the joint to bleed and swell following surgery — if blood soaks through the gauze, simply reinforce with additional gauze dressing for the remainder of the day and re-check.
- The surgical dressing is sterile and waterproof. Leave this dressing in place for 7 days after surgery. After 7 days, remove dressing and replace with clean a new dry dressing. Change this dressing daily until you are seen at your first postoperative visit 10-14 days after surgery.
- 48 hours after surgery it is ok to shower. Please keep the surgical dressing in place while you shower. You may allow water to run over the bandage. Do not remove bandage. Do not soak or immerse the bandage in water.
- Your stitches will be removed at your first postoperative visit.
- After your first postoperative visit 10-14 days after surgery, you can leave incision open to air. You may shower and allow water to run over incision. Do not soak or immerse incision in water. Do NOT apply ointments or creams to incisions.

### Medications

- A regional nerve block will be used during surgery. This helps with the pain, but this will wear off within 12-48 hours and it is not uncommon for patients to encounter more pain on the first or second day after surgery when swelling peaks.
- Most patients will require some narcotic pain medication for a short period of time – this can be taken as per directions on the bottle. You can begin the prescription pain medication provided to you upon arriving home and continue every 4-6 hours as needed for pain.
- Common side effects of the pain medication are nausea, drowsiness, and constipation. To decrease the side effects take the medication with food. If constipation occurs, consider taking an over the counter laxative.
- Zofran (Ondansetron) can be taken if needed for nausea.
- Do not drive a car or operate machinery while taking the narcotic medication
- If you are having pain that is not being controlled by the pain medication prescribed, you may take an over the counter anti-inflammatory medication such as ibuprofen or naproxen in between doses of pain medication. This will help to decrease pain and decrease the amount of narcotic medication required. Please take as directed on the bottle.
- For 2 weeks following surgery take one 81mg aspirin twice daily to lower the risk of developing a blood clot after surgery. Please contact the office should severe distal arm pain occur or significant swelling of the distal arm/hand occur.



You have been prescribed the following medications for use post-operatively, unless discussed otherwise:

1. Pain Medication: Unless discussed otherwise, you have been prescribed pain medication (Oxycodone, Tramadol, etc.) for use postoperatively. Take as prescribed as needed for pain. This medication should only be used in the initial postoperative period, and you should try to wean off of it over the first 1-2 weeks after surgery.
2. Acetaminophen (Tylenol): Unless discussed otherwise, or contraindicated due to other health reasons, you have been prescribed acetaminophen to help with pain control postoperatively. This should be taken on a scheduled basis. Do not use additional acetaminophen if your narcotic pain medication has acetaminophen in it.
3. Zofran (Ondansetron): Take as prescribed if needed for nausea.
4. Anti-Inflammatory: Unless discussed otherwise, or contraindicated due to other health reasons, you have been prescribed a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (Celecoxib, Ibuprofen, etc.) for use postoperatively. If you have no personal history of adverse response to anti-inflammatories (NSAIDs), take as prescribed with food to help reduce swelling and pain.
5. Aspirin 81mg: Please take one (1) 81 mg baby aspirin twice daily for 30 days following surgery. This is to help minimize the risk of blood clot (extremely rare). If you are under age 16 or unable to take aspirin for other medical reasons, you do not need to take aspirin after surgery.

### Activity

- Wear sling at all times other than personal hygiene, wardrobe changes, and exercises (last page).
- The sling will be worn during the day and at night until you are 2 weeks post-op. At 2 weeks post-op, you may remove the sling at night. At 4 weeks, the sling may be discontinued, unless otherwise specified.
- It is ok to sleep however you are comfortable.
- NO driving. You will be cleared to drive after the first postoperative visit if narcotic pain medication has been discontinued.
- Okay to return to non-labor work when ready and able. Please notify the office if written clearance is needed.

Air travel is permitted 5 days after surgery. Air travel and immobility increase the risk of blood clots. Unless you have been previously instructed to avoid aspirin products for medical reasons or if you are under age 16, ensure that you are taking 81 mg baby aspirin twice daily beginning the day after surgery to minimize the risk of blood clot.

### Ice Therapy

- Beginning immediately after surgery, use the ice machine (when prescribed) as directed for the first 2-3 days following surgery. Ice at your discretion thereafter.
- When using “real” ice, avoid direct skin contact > 20 mins to prevent damage / frostbite of the skin. In either case, check the skin frequently for excessive redness, blistering, or other signs of frostbite. When using the ice machine, it is okay to ice continuously as long as you check the skin frequently.



## Exercise

- Begin exercises 3x daily starting the day after surgery (wrist flexion/extension, pendulum swings) unless otherwise instructed. See last page for reference. If the exercises cause pain, stop and try again later in the day.
- Shoulder stiffness and discomfort is normal following surgery.
- Avoid movement of the arm against gravity or away from the body.
- Formal physical therapy (PT) will begin after your first postoperative visit or no sooner than 7 days after surgery.

## Diet

- Begin with clear liquids and light foods (jello, soup, etc.).
- Progress to your normal diet as tolerated.

## Emergencies

- Contact Dr. Boden's office if you experience any of the following:
  - Painful swelling or numbness (note that some swelling and numbness is normal)
  - Unrelenting pain
  - Fever (over 101° - it is normal to have a low grade fever for the first day or two following surgery) or chills
  - Redness around incisions
  - Color change in distal arm and/or hand
  - Continuous drainage or bleeding from incision (a small amount of drainage is expected)
  - Difficulty breathing
  - Excessive nausea/vomiting
  - Calf pain
- If you have an emergency that requires immediate attention proceed to the nearest emergency room.

## Follow-up Care

- If you do not already have a post-operative appointment scheduled, please contact our scheduler at 502-588-3630.
- Typically the first post-operative appointment following surgery is 10-14 days following surgery.
- If you have any further questions please contact the office or sent a message through MyChart.



## SHOULDER POST OPERATIVE EXERCISES

### WRIST FLEXION / EXTENSION



Actively bend wrist forward.  
Then backwards as far as you can.  
Repeat 10-15 times. Do 3 sessions per day.

### ELBOW FLEXION / EXTENSION



With palm either UP, DOWN, or THUMBSIDE UP  
gently bend elbow as far as possible.  
Hold for 5 seconds.  
Then straighten arm as far as possible.  
Repeat 10-15 times. Do 3 sessions per day.  
**\*\*DO NOT PERFORM THIS EXERCISE IF  
BICEP TENODESIS WAS PERFORMED\*\***

### PENDULUM SWINGS

(Clockwise/counterclockwise)



Let arm move in a clockwise circle,  
then counterclockwise by rocking body  
weight in a circular pattern.  
Repeat 10-15 times. Do 3 sessions per day

### PENDULUM SWINGS

(Side to side)



Gently move arm from side to side  
by rocking body weight from side to side.  
Let arm swing freely.  
Repeat 10-15 times. Do 3 sessions per day