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Post-op Instructions for Shoulder Capsulotomy & Manipulation

These instructions are to compliment the information given by the nursing staff and physical therapists. They cover many of the common questions.

Wound Care

- Dressings are to be kept clean and dry. You may change the dressing daily if desired. After removing the old dressing replace with 4x4 gauze pads and secure with tape. A small amount of clear drainage or bleeding is normal. If this is happening, the dressing should be changed daily.
- You may get the incision wet when showering 3 days after surgery. The shower should be brief and the wound patted dry with a clean towel. No baths or soaking the incision until 2 weeks after surgery and scabs are absent.
- If purulent drainage (thick white or greenish in color) is coming from the wound, or the wound has increasing redness, or if you are having a temperature of 101, please report these symptoms to your surgeon or the doctor on call.

Pain

- Ice your shoulder as frequently as possible. We recommend 4-5 times per day for 20 minutes per time. You may use either the ice bag/cooling device given to you at the hospital or simply place ice in a zip lock bag, wrap it in a towel, and place it on the shoulder. Do not apply ice or the cooling device directly to the skin as it may cause damage to the skin if left on for long periods of time.
- Narcotic pain medication will be prescribed for use after you leave the hospital. Try to wean down as tolerated. These medications can cause constipation and you may want to use an over the counter stool softener. Tylenol products may be used instead of the prescribed pain medication. The prescribed narcotic medications should not be taken at the same time as plain Tylenol. You may supplement your pain medication by using ibuprofen or Aleve for any breakthrough pain. It can help to stagger your pain medication with ibuprofen or Aleve as needed. If a refill of medication is needed, please call the office during regular business hours, Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. In general, refills will not be made after hours or on weekends, so please plan ahead.

Driving

- To drive you must no longer be taking narcotic pain pills (plain Tylenol is allowed). Also, you must feel strong and alert.

Exercises

- If you are sent home with an IV pole traction unit, you are to use it as much as possible. Use it for 1-2 hours at a time, throughout the day, for a total of 8-10 hours/day.
- Upon discharge from the hospital you must aggressively work on maintaining your shoulder range-of-motion by performing the shoulder exercises shown to you by the physical therapist. You are also encouraged to perform hand, wrist and elbow range of motion exercises 4-5 times per day.
- Your physician may refer you to physical therapy for daily therapy following discharge from the hospital to help you maintain your range of motion.

Follow-up

Make sure an appointment has been scheduled for you at Chippewa Valley Orthopedics & Sports Medicine for approximately 1 week after surgery.