

AC Shoulder Reconstruction

General Post-Operative Instructions for AC Shoulder Reconstruction

Anesthesia:

You may feel a little queasy for a day or two after the anesthetic. During that time you should not drink alcoholic beverages, make any important decisions or engage in any potentially hazardous activities. It is very common to be slightly nauseated and you should start with a light, low fat diet until your appetite comes back.

Post-operative constipation can result due to a combination of inactivity, effects of general anesthesia and narcotic pain medication. To prevent post-operative constipation, increase water and fiber to your diet the week prior and following surgery. Also, try to remain as active as possible.

Physical activity stimulates the bowel. If constipation occurs you may try taking Metamucil (usually 2 TBS mixed in a large glass of water) or a stool-softner (Senokot). If you continue to suffer from constipation, please call your primary care physician.

Bathing and Wound Care:

It is not unusual for some blood to show through on the dressing. If bleeding seems to be continuing and the area is larger than 2 inches or so, please call the office.

Remove the dressing and shower two days after the surgery. It is ok to get the sutures or tape strips wet.

You should not submerge the incisions in a pool, hot tub or bath until the sutures or tape strips have been removed in the office and the incisions are healed over with skin.

If you are uncomfortable with removing the dressing it is fine for you to leave it in place until you are seen back in the office.

Pain Management:

A long acting local anesthetic is injected into the shoulder after surgery and usually wears off 6-12 hours later. As it wears off your shoulder will begin to hurt more.

Ice is very helpful especially in the first 2-3 days and after doing exercises. Use a towel or other padding between the ice and your skin.

You have been prescribed a narcotic pain medication. -It is a good idea to take your oral pain medication as you feel the local anesthetic beginning to wear off. It is a good idea to try to stay ahead of the pain for the first 24 hours after that you should only take your pain medication as needed.

The interval for taking pain medication, as noted on the bottle, is a minimum interval. That is, you should not take the medication more frequently than that. You should take the medication less often than on the prescription if you are not in pain. You should not set your alarm clock to remind you to take your pain medicine, nor should you take it on a set schedule if you are not hurting, as this can result in overdosing of the medication.

If you do not have trouble with ulcers or stomach pain, and if you do not have kidney problems, you may also take an anti-inflammatory medication

in addition to or instead of the narcotic medicine. An average sized adult may take three 200 mg ibuprofen (Advil/Motrin) every 8 hours, or Aleve two tablets twice a day, with food for a period of two weeks.

Driving:

Your shoulder is mechanically able to perform the activities associated with normal driving. In order to drive safely you must be able to get around without a sling and be able to move your hands to the different controls without hesitation or significant pain.

You should be mechanically able to do the things needed to drive. We cannot tell you what would happen if you did something that hurt and led to your losing concentration etc. You must make your own determination as to whether you are safe to drive.

You cannot drive if you are taking narcotic pain medication.

Follow Up:

You should have had your post op appointment arranged at the time your surgery was scheduled. If you do not know when your appointment is please call the office to find out.

Some Reasons to Call:

Fever greater than 101.5 (it is very common to have a low grade fever the first night or two after surgery)

Redness or swelling that is spreading from the edges of the incisions

Pain that is out of control or worsening and not relieved by rest, elevation, ice and pain medication.

Chest pain, shortness of breath

For Emergencies After the Office is Closed: 503-214-5200

If You Think That You Have an Urgent Problem That Needs to
be Seen Right Away Then go to the Emergency Room