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Upper Extremity Specialist

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Arthroscopic Capsular Release Post-Operative Instructions:

What surgery did I have? You had an arthroscopic procedure to release the inflamed capsule that is causing your limited range of motion.

What should I expect in the first 48 hours?

Icing: Apply ice to the surgical site for twenty minutes every hour during waking hours. *Delay use of ice if you received a nerve block.

Make a Fist: Try to make a full fist several times per day.

Once your nerve block has worn off, begin moving the shoulder as you tolerate. Physical therapy will begin either the day of surgery or the day after your surgery.

Anesthesia: Anesthesia can take up to 24 hours to leave your system. During this time you should not be left alone. You should not operate heavy machinery, care for small children, make important decisions, sign legal documents, drink alcohol or participate in strenuous activity.

Nerve Block: If a nerve block was administered for your procedure, your arm will be numb for approximately 12 hours. When the block wears off your arm will likely be very painful and throbbing. **Begin taking your pain medication BEFORE your block wears off** to stay ahead of this pain. Delay using ice until after the block wears off to avoid an ice burn.

Emptying your bladder: Sometimes the bladder is slow to wake up from anesthesia. If you have not urinated within 8 hours of your surgery, call your physician and go to the emergency department.

Diet: For the first 24-48 hours after surgery, keep your diet bland; avoid spicy, greasy or fatty foods. If you are nauseous, return your diet to clear liquids (water, ginger ale, apple juice, tea, etc) then slowly advance as tolerated.

What medications should I be taking? It is recommended to utilize over the counter acetaminophen (Tylenol) and ibuprofen (Motrin) for pain control.

If a narcotic medication is prescribed:

- Take only as directed and do not exceed dosing as prescribed. Wean down and to over-the-counter medicines as tolerated.
- Do not exceed 4000mg per day of acetaminophen between your prescription narcotic and over-the-counter Tylenol. Overdosing on acetaminophen can cause severe liver damage.



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- A common side effect is constipation. Drink plenty of fluids and consider taking an over-the-counter stool softener daily to prevent this.

When can I remove the bandages? You may remove the bandages 3-5 days after surgery. If prior to then the dressing becomes saturated, wound is excessively bleeding/draining, or you are concerned for infection, remove the dressing and notify our office immediately for evaluation. Once dressing is removed keep the incisions dry, wearing a waterproof dressing while showering. Continue to cover the incision sites with a band-aid until seen for a follow up visit.

What can I do with my arm and hand?

- Move the shoulder as you tolerate, once your nerve block has worn off.
- Use the arm for light activity. Do not hold anything heavier than a coffee cup.
- If you had a biceps tenodesis procedure, do not begin elbow range of motion until directed by physical therapist.

When should I have a return appointment? You should have a follow up visit with a provider on our team approximately two weeks after surgery. If this is not yet scheduled, please call our secretary at the number listed at the top of this page to arrange.

Can I drive? It is your responsibility to determine if you can safely drive. You should not drive while taking narcotic medications.

Following surgery, patients are at increased risk of blood clots. If you develop pain/swelling in the lower legs, shortness of breath, and/or fevers, please call our office immediately and go to the emergency department.

Symptoms of infection include spiked fevers, increasing pain, redness and purulent drainage at the incision site. If these symptoms develop, contact our office immediately. If outside of business hours or immediate evaluation is not available in our clinic, go to the emergency department.