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Patient Sticker Here

Date

## **POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS**

### **TOTAL SHOULDER REPLACEMENT**

#### **DAY OF SURGERY:**

1. Ice the shoulder every 2-3 hours for 15-20 minutes. This will help reduce the swelling and minimize the pain. However, you will need to continuously change the water so that it remains cold.
2. Your arm will be in a sling following surgery. You will be in this sling for the next 6 weeks. This includes sleeping with it on as well. I will let you know the exact duration at your follow-up visit.
3. You will meet a Physical Therapist in the hospital the next day. They will instruct you in some exercises that you will begin doing right away. They will also instruct you how to dress yourself.
4. You may be more comfortable sleeping in a semi-seated position the first few nights following surgery. Keep a pillow propped under the elbow and forearm for comfort. If you have a recliner type of chair it might be beneficial. If not that is fine too, but it would be helpful to sleep propped up with pillows behind your operated shoulder as well under your elbow and forearm. This will reduce pulling on the suture lines.
5. Prescriptions for pain medication and an anti-inflammatory will be prescribed for you. We suggest you use the pain medication the first night prior to going to bed, in order to ease any pain when the nerve block wears off. You should avoid taking pain medications on an empty

stomach as it will make you nauseous. Otherwise, use the pain medication ONLY as needed.

Use the anti-inflammatory as prescribed, because it will help reduce the pain and swelling after surgery.

### DAY 1 AND UNTIL POST-OP VISIT:

1. Ice the shoulder for 20-30 minutes at least 4 times per day for the first few days. Then use it 2-3 times a day after doing your exercises.
2. Remove the bandages 48 hours after surgery. There will an incision site in the fold of skin just above your arm pit going down your arm. **Do Not** remove the white steri strip tape that covers that incision. You may leave the front incision uncovered except for the steri strip tape. If there is any leakage of blood you may cover it with a piece of gauze. Do not put anything including bacitracin or ointments on or near the incisions.
3. You may shower 96 hours after surgery but **Do Not** get the sutures wet. Wrap your shoulder with plastic wrap and secure it with tape.
4. You can remove your sling for short periods only when you are sitting in a chair not doing any activity. However, your elbow must be supported by pillows. You must wear the sling if you are doing any activity, especially while you are in public places for the next 3-4 weeks. I will let you know the exact duration at your follow-up visit. We do not want your elbow to become stiff. Therefore, you may move your elbow up and down when it is not in the sling, as shown in the picture on the following page.
5. Begin doing the exercises as indicated on the attached sheet. The therapist will go over this with you in the hospital. You will not begin any formal physical therapy for 3-4 weeks. I will provide a detailed prescription for therapy when you come in to remove your sutures next week.
6. Do not drink alcoholic beverages or take illicit drugs when taking pain medications.
7. You may return to work/school in the next couple of days when you feel up to it.

8. When dressing, put your operative arm in the sleeve first. When getting undressed, take your operative arm out last. Loose fitting, button-down shirts are recommended.
9. In most states it is against the law to drive while your arm is in a sling.
10. Call the office tomorrow with any questions, and make an appointment to have your sutures removed next week.