

Craig S. Mauro, MD  
Discharge Instructions  
Shoulder Arthroscopy or Open Shoulder Surgery with Repair/Reconstruction

A successful recovery after shoulder surgery includes controlling swelling and discomfort, healing, regaining normal range of motion of the shoulder joint, regaining strength in the muscles around the shoulder joint, and gradually returning to preoperative activities. The following instructions are intended as a guide to help you achieve these goals until your 1<sup>st</sup> postoperative visit.

**A. Comfort:**

Although surgery uses only a few small incisions around the shoulder joint, swelling and discomfort can be present. To minimize discomfort, please do the following:

1. **Ice:** Ice controls swelling and discomfort by slowing down the circulation in your shoulder. Use the EZ Wrap or place crushed ice in plastic bag over your shoulder 4-6 times every day for no more than 20 minutes at a time.
2. **TENS Unit:** You may be given a TENS Unit for pain control following surgery. You have been given instructions and a protocol with the unit. You may begin to use the TENS unit once the nerve block has worn off (if given at the time of surgery).
3. **Pain Medication:** Take medications as prescribed, but only as often as necessary. Avoid alcohol and driving if you are taking pain medication.
4. **Nerve Block:** You may have received a nerve block at the time of surgery. Nerve blocks typically wear off 12-18 hours after they are administered. When you begin to feel some discomfort, take your first dose of pain medication. Do not wait until the pain is severe, as it may be more difficult to control the pain then.
5. **Sling:** A sling has been provided for your comfort and to stabilize your shoulder for proper healing. Use the sling until directed to discontinue by Dr. Mauro (approximately 6 weeks).
6. **Sleeping:** Sleeping in an easy chair or recliner may be most comfortable for the first few days after surgery. You must sleep with the sling.

**B. Medication:**

You have been given prescriptions for pain medication and a stool softener to take after surgery. Depending on your medical history and the type of surgery performed, you may or may not be given a prescription for an anti-inflammatory medication or a medication to prevent a blood clot. Please let Dr. Mauro know if you have an allergy or sensitivity to any of these medications.

1. **Pain Relief:** Percocet (oxycodone/acetaminophen) 5/325mg, 1-2 tablets every 4-6 hours as needed for pain
2. **Stool Softener:** Colace (docusate sodium) 100mg, 1 capsule twice a day as needed for constipation while taking pain medication
3. **Anti-inflammatory:** Naprosyn (naproxen) 500mg, 1 tablet twice a day with food for 2 weeks then as needed for inflammation
4. **Blood Clot (DVT) Prevention:** Aspirin 325mg, 1 tablet once a day with food to prevent blood clots

**C. Eating:**

1. Your first few meals after surgery should include light, easily digestible foods and plenty of liquids.
2. Some people experience slight nausea as a temporary reaction to anesthesia.

**D. Activities:**

1. You will be immobilized with a sling and abductor pillow, full time, for approximately the first 6 weeks after surgery. Dr. Mauro will tell you when you can stop using the sling. The sling may be removed for prescribed exercises.
2. Your sling may be removed for gentle range of motion (ROM) exercises. These exercises should be done 3 times each day (15 repetitions of each exercise at each session). You will be given an instruction sheet with photos explaining the exercises you should perform. You should begin your exercises on the day after surgery.
3. You may NOT move your shoulder by yourself in certain directions. NO active flexion (lifting arm up), abduction (lifting arm away from body), or external rotation (extending lower arm out to the side while your elbow is at your side bent in "L" shape) until Dr. Mauro or your therapist gives you permission. These exercises must be done by someone else (passive range of motion).
4. Physical therapy should begin approximately 3 weeks after surgery. Make an appointment with a therapist of your choice within this time frame. You will be given a prescription and instructions for therapy at your first postoperative visit. Please take these with you to your first therapy visit.
5. Your ability to return to work depends on your level of discomfort and how much demand your job puts on your shoulder and arm. If you have any questions, please discuss them with Dr. Mauro.
6. Athletic activities such as throwing, lifting, swimming, bicycling, jogging, running, and stop-and-go sports should be avoided until cleared by Dr. Mauro.
7. Driving is NOT permitted as long as the sling is necessary.

**E. Wound Care:**

1. Keep the dressing on, clean, and dry for the first full day after surgery.
2. Remove the dressing on the second day after surgery. You may have steri-strips (small white tape on the skin) over your incision(s). These steri-strips must be left in place until the first office visit. You may apply band-aids to the small incisions around your shoulder. For larger incisions, apply a dry dressing of sterile 4x4 gauze and tape. The sterile 4x4 gauze may be purchased at your local pharmacy. Apply new band-aids and/or a new dry dressing each day.
3. You may shower 5 days after surgery covering your incision(s) with plastic wrap. Apply new band-aids and/or a new dry dressing after showering.
4. Tub bathing, swimming, and soaking should be avoided for two weeks after surgery.

**F. Call Dr. Mauro If:**

1. Pain persists or worsens in the first few days after surgery.
2. You note excessive redness of wounds and surrounding area, or drainage of cloudy or bloody material from the wounds. (Clear red tinted fluid and some mild drainage should be expected). Drainage of any kind 5 days after surgery should be reported to Dr. Mauro.
3. You have a fever greater than 101°.

4. You have pain, swelling, or redness in your arm or hand or legs.
5. You have numbness or weakness in your arm or hand or legs.
6. You have any questions or concerns at any time.

**G. Return to the Office:**

Your first office appointment should be within the first 7-10 days after your surgery. Call Dr. Mauro's office to make your first postoperative appointment if it was not already made.

Your first postoperative appointment with Dr. Mauro is: \_\_\_\_\_