

POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

Shoulder AC Joint Reconstruction

Dr. Vishal Mehta

visit www.healthy-txt.com/drmehta
for more detailed instructions

PAIN: Please take the narcotic pain medication as directed for the first 24-48 hrs. After the first day or two, as the pain lessens, you may decrease the frequency with which you take the medication. Remember, the medications are not necessarily meant to completely eliminate your pain, only to make it more bearable.

Narcotic pain medications can cause constipation; you may wish to use an over-the-counter stool softener to help prevent this.

Use ice or a cold therapy unit constantly for the first 48 hours, then as frequently as needed.

MILD PAIN: If you are having minimal pain and would like to switch to a milder medication, please take Tylenol/acetaminophen (extra strength or regular). Do not take Tylenol and Norco together (this would be too much acetaminophen). Do not exceed more than 4000mg of Tylenol/acetaminophen in a 24 hour period. Try to avoid medications such as Advil, Aleve, Motrin, or Ibuprofen for about 3 months after surgery- some studies show that these medications could slow healing of your surgical repair.

DRESSINGS: You will have a soft dressing applied over your incision. It is meant to absorb any leaking blood or fluid from the joint, and to protect from infection. Leakage immediately after surgery is normal and actually helps to drain some of the fluid that accumulates in the joint during surgery. The dressings may become moist or blood-stained; this is normal and usually not a cause for alarm.

BATHING: You may remove your dressing 48 hours after your surgery to take a shower. For showering, you may remove your entire sling and let your arm rest at your side. Under the surgical dressing, you may have steri-strips over your incision (small white strips of tape). Please leave them in place until they fall off on their own or until they are removed at your first post-op appointment. You may let soap and water gently wash over your incision, but do not scrub them. Pat them dry with a towel, then recover each of the incisions with a band-aid if desired. You may not soak your shoulder in a bathtub or go into a pool or hot tub until incision is well healed (usually takes a few weeks).

PHYSICAL THERAPY: Therapy typically starts 4 weeks after surgery. The timing for when you begin physical therapy will be individualized based on your surgery. Please ask your therapist to visit www.healthy-txt.com/drmehta for Dr. Mehta's protocol.

WHEN TO CALL: Please call our office at (630) 584-1400 if you develop a fever greater than 101°F, increasing pain that is not responding to pain medication, redness around incisions or shoulder, increased swelling, persistent bleeding or drainage, or drainage other than clear fluid or blood. If it is after hours, the answering service will contact the physician assistant on call. It is normal to develop bruising to the operative arm. Some people have bruising across the chest all the way down to the hand. It can also be normal to develop swelling to the arm and hand. Gravity tends to pull fluid down the arm- your body will be able to reabsorb this fluid but it may

take a few weeks. If the swelling becomes increasingly painful and more tender to the touch, please let our office know.

AFTER SURGERY: You will be receiving a post-operative phone call from the surgical staff within a few days after surgery to check on you and assist you with any concerns.

DRIVING: Please do not attempt driving for about 3-4 weeks after surgery. This is for your safety, as well as other drivers- please do not attempt to drive with only one hand. Reasons for no driving post operatively: A quick, reactive motion of the shoulder while driving could damage your surgical repair. Secondly, you should not drive while taking any narcotic pain medications. We do not recommend wearing a sling while driving.

SLING: You will have the sling for 4 weeks total. The sling has 2 components: sling and waist portion. The entire sling should be worn at all times when you are up and walking around. While you are sitting/resting, you may remove the sling as long as your upper arm/shoulder stays near your body. You may take off the entire sling up to 3 times daily to gently bend and straighten your elbow (without fully locking the elbow straight) while keeping your shoulder near your body. If tolerable, the waist portion of the sling should be worn while sleeping (for a month if possible).

MOTIONS TO AVOID: Do not lift shoulder out in front of body, out to your side, or reach behind your back until your physical therapist has progressed you to that point in therapy. Usually, it is 4-5 weeks before you'll be moving the shoulder on your own. It is ok to use your elbow and use your hand to do things like typing (as long as your shoulder stays near your body). For example, you should put a computer keyboard in your lap instead of reaching out on a table for your keyboard). Initially in therapy, your therapist will do "passive motions," which means your muscles won't be doing the work. This protects your surgical repair and allows your body to heal.

SLEEPING: Please try to wear the sling while you are sleeping for 3-4 weeks after surgery- this provides good support to the shoulder. You may remove the sling to sleep if you are too uncomfortable, but try to keep your shoulder near your body. Some people find it more comfortable to sleep upright (in a recliner chair) for a few days to weeks after surgery- this is optional.

RETURN TO WORK: This depends on the nature of your job. If you have a desk job or can work from home, you may be able to do computer/phone work within 1 week of surgery. However, you may not drive yourself to work for 3-4 weeks.

If you have a labor job, or job that requires heavy lifting/repetitive use of your shoulder, you may need to be off work for months. You will have restrictions for up to 6 months after your Latarjet. Some employers allow light-duty, and we can give you work restriction notes at each post-operative visit if necessary.

RETURN TO ALL ACTIVITIES: Typically, if your shoulder has progressed as expected, you will have no restrictions at 6 months post op. We will discuss further at your 6 month post op visit.