

POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS Clavicle Fracture ORIF

Dr. Petsche

PAIN: Your prescription for pain medication will be given to you before you leave the surgery center. Please take your prescription pain medication for the first 24 hours as directed. 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.

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.

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

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

BATHING: You may remove your dressing 2 days 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 will have

absorbable sutures under little white steri-strips. Please leave the strips 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 incisions, 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 incisions are well healed (usually 3-4 weeks).

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.

PHYSICAL THERAPY: Therapy typically starts 2-3 weeks after surgery. Most patients go to physical therapy 2-3x/week for about 4-6 weeks. Not every patient with this surgery will require formal physical therapy, some patients will be given home exercises.

OFFICE VISIT: Your first post-op visit will be scheduled 10-14 days after surgery. At this visit, we'll check your incisions and answer any questions you may have. A few x-rays of the clavicle will be obtained at this first post-op visit.

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.

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.

DRIVING: You may drive once you have stopped the narcotic pain medication and can comfortably move your shoulder to at least shoulder height. You should not wear a sling while driving. Typically it will be 2-4 weeks before you can safely drive.

SLING: The sling should be worn at all times when you are up and walking around. While you are sitting/resting, you may remove the sling occasionally as long as your upper arm/shoulder stays near your body. Typically the sling will be worn for 1 month total.

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.

If you have a labor-intense job, or job that requires heavy lifting/repetitive use of your shoulder, you may need to be off work for a few months. We can give you work restriction notes at each post-operative visit if necessary.

RETURN TO SCHOOL: You may return to school once pain is tolerable and can be managed during school hours without narcotic pain medications. Most patients return to school within 3-7 days after surgery. If you need any notes for missing class or “no gym,” we can give you these at your first post op visit.

MOST COMMON QUESTIONS

CLAVICLE ORIF

How should I be using my sling? The sling should be worn at all times when you are up and walking around. While you are sitting/resting, you may remove the sling occasionally as long as your upper arm/shoulder stays near your body. Typically the sling will be worn for 1 month_total.

What motions should I avoid? You should avoid reaching overhead/behind your back until you are progressed to this point in physical therapy. While the plate and screws are providing a secure repair for your fracture, your body still must heal the fracture for this surgery to be successful. Please don't do heavy lifting until you are progressed by your surgeon and physical therapist.

When can I drive? You may drive once you feel comfortable moving the shoulder without pain and you are not taking any narcotic pain

medications. You should not wear a sling while driving. Most patients should wait 2-4 weeks to drive.

How should I be sleeping? Please try to wear the sling while you are sleeping for at least a few nights, for comfort. Sometimes it is more comfortable to sleep upright (in a recliner chair) for a few days to weeks after surgery- this is optional.

HOW CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT CLAVICLE FRACTURES AND SURGERY?

Please visit AAOS site: <http://orthoinfo.aaos.org/topic.cfm?topic=A00072>

SHOULD I BE TAKING SUPPLEMENTS FOR MY FRACTURE HEALING?

Yes, we recommend a healthy diet and daily recommended vitamins and minerals to support your overall health and bone healing.

Please visit <http://orthoinfo.aaos.org/topic.cfm?topic=A00317> for specifics about calcium and vitamin D supplements.

*Please check with your medical doctor if you have underlying health conditions/if you are supposed to limit calcium/vitamin D

Good article on bone health <http://www.betterbones.com/bonefracture/speedhealing.pdf>

SPORTS SPECIFICS CLAVICLE ORIF

We know you are eager to return to your sports and hobbies. We want to guide you safely through that process. Please use the following as a guide

GOLF

2 weeks post op: Putting

2-3 months post op: If you have full and comfortable motion, you may take full swings with your irons

3-4 months post op: You may progress to your driver/full play as tolerated

BASKETBALL

1 month post-op: jogging & dribbling drills

3 months post-op: Shooting around

4 months post-op: All activity as tolerated

SWIMMING

1 month post op: Once your incision is well healed, you may get into a pool. You may progress swimming as tolerated- ensure you have good shoulder motion before you attempt swimming.

WEIGHT LIFTING

1 week post op: You may do lower body and core exercises as tolerated. Please follow the instructions of your physical therapist for upper body exercise. Once you are nearing the end of physical therapy (typically 3 months post-op), your therapist can create a safe “return-to-lifting” program. Physical Therapists and can outline a specific plan for you.