
Post-op Instructions for Clavicle ORIF

These instructions are to complement the information given by the nursing staff and physical therapists. They cover many of the common questions.

Wound Care

- Dressings are to be kept clean and dry. You may remove the dressing three days after surgery. Keep the mesh tape and glue or steri-strips in place over the incision. Cover the incision with dry gauze and tape and change daily until dressing is clean for 48 hours. You may leave the incision open to air after this time.
- You may get the incision wet when showering 3 days after surgery. The shower should be brief and the wound patted dry with a clean towel. No baths or soaking the incision until 3 weeks after surgery, and scabs are absent.
- If purulent drainage (thick white or greenish in color) is coming from the wound, or the wound has increasing redness, or if you are having a temperature of 101, please report these symptoms to your surgeon or the doctor on call.

Pain

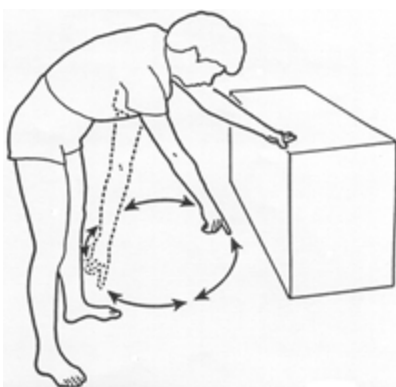
- Ice your shoulder as frequently as possible. We recommend 4-5 times per day for 20 minutes per time. You may use either the ice bag or cooling device given to you at the hospital or simply place ice in a zip lock bag, wrap it in a towel, and place on the shoulder. Do not place ice or cooling devices directly on the skin as it may cause skin damage.
- Narcotic pain medication will be prescribed for use after you leave the hospital. Try to wean down as tolerated. These medications can cause constipation and you may want to use an over the counter stool softener. Tylenol products may be used instead of the prescribed pain medication. The prescribed narcotic medications should not be taken at the same time as plain Tylenol. You may supplement your pain medication by using ibuprofen or Aleve for any breakthrough pain. It can help to stagger your pain medication with ibuprofen or Aleve as needed. If a refill of medication is needed, please call the office during regular business hours, Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. In general, refills will not be made after hours or on the weekends, so please plan ahead.

Driving

- To drive you must no longer be taking narcotic pain pills, (plain Tylenol is allowed). Also, you must feel strong and alert. You need to leave your arm in the sling to hold the bottom of the steering wheel, and should not actively raise your arm until cleared by physical therapy. Most people start driving approximately two weeks after surgery, but use your judgment as to whether or not you feel ready to drive.

Exercises

- You will be in a sling after surgery. Initially, you should wear the sling at all times and only remove it for exercises and showering. Feel free to adjust the sling as needed to make it more comfortable. You will wear the sling pretty consistently for six weeks after surgery.
- Many patients find sleeping in a recliner to be more comfortable than sleeping in bed after surgery.
- You may also find it beneficial to wear a shirt with buttons or a zipper down the front to make dressing easier. Put the surgical arm sleeve on first and remove the surgical arm last.
- Upon discharge from the hospital, you are encouraged to perform hand, wrist, and elbow range of motion exercises 4-5 times per day. These exercises will help to reduce swelling.
- You should also gently perform shoulder pendulums with your waist bent and your arm dangling at your side while making small circles with your hand. You should perform these 2-4 times per day starting the day after surgery.





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Follow-up

- Make sure an appointment has been scheduled for you for approximately 10-14 days after surgery.
- Please call the office with any questions or concerns.

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