

Post-op Instructions for Clavicle ORIF

These instructions compliment the information given by nursing staff and physical therapists. They cover many common questions.

WOUND CARE

Dressings are to be kept clean and dry. Leave steri-strips or clear bandages in place until your follow-up visit. A small amount of clear drainage or bleeding is normal. If this happens, use dry gauze and tape over the incisions and change daily until drainage stops.

You may get the incision wet when showering 3 days after surgery. The shower should be brief and the wounds patted dry with a clean towel. No baths or soaking the incision until 3-4 weeks after surgery and well healed.

If you notice purulent drainage (thick white or greenish in color) from the wound, increasing redness, or you have a temperature of 101 or higher, please report these symptoms to your surgeon or the doctor on call.

PAIN AND SWELLING

To lessen pain and swelling, you may ice after surgery. Put the ice in a zip lock bag or towel and place over the surgical/fracture site. We recommend 20 minutes, 4-5 times per day for the first 1-3 days. Do not place ice or cooling devices directly on the skin for prolonged periods of time as it may damage the skin.

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.

*Children under age 12 should take Tylenol 10mg/kg/dose.

**Tylenol 325 mg: 3 tabs every 8 hours OR Tylenol 500 mg: 2 tabs every 8 hours

DRIVING

To drive you must no longer be taking narcotic pain pills (plain Tylenol is allowed). Before driving, you must feel strong and alert and able to get in and out of the car without assistance.

SLING

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. Sling usage will be directed by MD and care team.

EXERCISES

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 decrease swelling. Pendulum exercises are encouraged 2-4 times daily and should begin the day after surgery. These exercises consist of bending at the waist and performing gentle circles as your arm dangles from your shoulder. You should not attempt to elevate the surgical arm under its own muscle power. Your Physical Therapist will progress your activity appropriately.

FOLLOW-UP

Make sure an appointment has been scheduled for you at Chippewa Valley Orthopedics & Sports Medicine for approximately 1-2 weeks after surgery.

Please call the office with any questions or concerns.

Nathan Harris, MD
Chippewa Valley Orthopedics & Sports Medicine
715-832-1400