



**STERLING RIDGE  
ORTHOPAEDICS  
& SPORTS MEDICINE**

Mark A. Eilers, MD, MS, FAAOS  
Orthopedic Sports Medicine  
Arthroscopic, Trauma, & Reconstructive Surgery

**POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS**  
**TOTAL SHOULDER ARTHROPLASTY**

**PLEASE READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS COMPLETELY AND ASK FOR CLARIFICATION  
IF NECESSARY – DIRECT QUESTIONS TO YOUR NURSE BEFORE LEAVING THE  
HOSPITAL OR VIA PHONE TO DR. EILERS STAFF AFTER ARRIVING HOME**

**OFFICE NUMBER: 832.698.0111**

**WHAT CAN I EXPECT AFTER SURGERY?**

- Pain, swelling, and bruising are not unusual for the first 2 weeks after surgery.
- It is normal to feel drowsy, dizzy, or weak 24-48 hours afterwards. If you feel light-headed, rest a moment before standing AND have an adult assist you.
- An upset stomach (nausea), vomiting, fatigue, and a low-grade fever (not over 101.4°F) are possible due to medication you received during surgery. These usually improve within 24 hours.

**ICE THERAPY**

- Begin immediately after surgery.
- If using a ‘cryo-cuff’ or similar ice/compression device, use as directed in the instruction manual for the first 2 weeks following surgery.
- When using "real" ice, avoid direct skin contact > 20 mins to prevent damage/frostbite of skin.
- In either case, check the skin frequently for excessive redness, blistering or other signs of frostbite.
- Remember to keep the extremity elevated while icing when able.

**WOUND CARE**

Wash your hands before and after caring for your incision

- It is normal for the wound to bleed and swell following surgery – if blood soaks onto the outer dressings, reinforce with additional gauze/tape for the remainder of day and check again.
- Keep the dressings clean and dry, and do not remove, for 2 days after surgery.
- On post-operative day 2, remove the outer dressings and yellow gauze layer. There will be a clear gauze adhered to the skin, do not peel this off. This is a waterproof layer that stays on until your first post-operative visit. We will remove this layer in the office.

- You may get the incision wet in the shower on post-operative day 2.
- Redress incisions with large Primapore or island dressing. Do not use topicals such as Neosporin or hydrogen peroxide.
- Do not submerge (soak) the incisions in a bath tub, hot tub, or pool until they are completely healed (about 3-4 weeks).
- Call the office if you have any questions/concerns regarding the incision.

## **ACTIVITY**

- Rest at home the day of and the day after surgery. Slowly increase your activity each day as you feel comfortable.
- Remain in the sling at all times other than personal hygiene, wardrobe changes, and home exercises.

 Please contact our office and ask to speak with DME personnel with any sling questions

- Okay to remove sling 3x daily for bending of elbow, wrist, hand beginning on the first post-operative day.
- Do not engage in activities which increase shoulder pain over the first 7-10 days following surgery.
- When lying in bed, support your shoulder and arm with one or two pillows. You may find it more comfortable to sleep in a recliner/chair. Avoid lying flat.
- When dressing, start with your surgical arm and finish with your non-surgical arm.
- When undressing, start with your non-surgical arm and finish with your surgical arm.
- Squeeze your hand and extend and bend your fingers for a count of 10. Do this exercise at least 4 times a day.
- Do not drive until your surgeon says it is okay. Do not drive if taking narcotic pain medications.

## **PHYSICAL THERAPY**

- You will begin physical therapy after your first post-operative visit (unless instructed otherwise). Call our office if you do not already have a physical therapy appointment set up.
- Participate in physical therapy, and fulfill the home exercises as instructed by the physical therapist. Exercise prevents muscle weakness, improves circulation, and rebuilds strength and flexibility.
- Avoid movement of the arm against gravity or away from the body.

## **DIET**

- Drink plenty of fluids. If you are taking pain medication, do not drink alcohol.

- Start by drinking small amounts of fluids, such as water, clear carbonated beverages, tea, or soup.
- Gradually add bland foods to your diet, such as dry toast or crackers.
- Start with light meals. Resume your regular diet as you feel comfortable.
- Pain medications can cause constipation. Eat fiber (fruits and vegetables) and drink plenty of fluids.
- Take the prescribed stool softener as directed if taking narcotic pain medications.
- If loss of appetite following surgery, use Boost or Ensure meal replacement shakes for nutrition.

## **EMERGENCIES**

- Contact the office if you are having any of these symptoms:
  - Painful swelling or numbness that progressively worsens
  - Fever of 101°F (38°C) or higher
  - Unrelenting pain
  - Persistent nausea and/or vomiting
  - Excessive bleeding or fluid from the surgical site
  - Symptoms of deep vein thrombosis (DVT) such as swelling, redness, warmth, or pain in your calf
  - Inability to urinate
  - Increased drowsiness from pain medication. Stop taking pain/narcotic medication if you become too drowsy
  - Increased or foul-smelling drainage from incision site
  - Significant redness, tenderness, or swelling around the incision
  - Separation of the skin closures

**IF YOU HAVE A NEED THAT REQUIRES IMMEDIATE ATTENTION, PROCEED TO THE NEAREST EMERGENCY ROOM OR CALL 911**