

Patient Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Surgery: \_\_\_\_\_

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOLLOWING SHOULDER SURGERY

Please note that the instructions provided below are general guidelines to be followed. However, any written or verbal instructions provided by your surgeon supersede the instructions below and should be followed.

### HOW LONG DO I HAVE TO WEAR MY SLING?

If you had a **"REPAIR" PROCEDURE**, (Rotator Cuff Repair, Labral Repair, Stabilization, or Coracoid Transfer) you will typically have to wear the sling for 4-6 weeks. Your surgeon will better inform you during your first post-operative visit.

If you did not have a repair procedure, you may stop using your sling as soon as you are comfortable.

### DO I HAVE TO WEAR THE SLING AT ALL TIMES? DO I HAVE TO WEAR IT TO SLEEP?

You should remove the sling 3 - 4 times per day to move your elbow, wrist and fingers to prevent stiffness. You may also take the sling off for showering. You **MUST** wear the sling at all times while in public and to sleep.

When instructed to do so, you may gradually wean yourself from wearing it. You'll first stop wearing it when you're home/indoors. When you're comfortable doing so, you may remove it for outdoor use as well.

### WHEN CAN I BEGIN DRIVING?

Typically, you will be able to resume driving when your sling comes off at around 4-6 weeks. Keep in mind that it is against the law to drive while in a sling.

### WHEN CAN I RETURN TO WORK?

This depends on the demands of your job (labor vs. desk job). Some patients return to work as soon as 4-7 days post-operatively and others require extensive time away from work if "limited duty" is not available.

### WHEN CAN I PLAY SPORTS AGAIN?

You will be able to participate in certain activities in a progressive manner throughout your recovery. These activities depend on your progress and timeframe of recovery and will be determined by your therapist and your surgeon. You will not be able to participate in contact sports for 6 months following surgery.



**HOW LONG WILL I HAVE  
PHYSICAL THERAPY  
AFTER THE SURGERY?**

The typical therapy program will be 2 times a week for a minimum of 3-4 months. The first phase of therapy will be designed to safely regain your range of motion, while the second phase will be directed at regaining function, strength and endurance.

**HOW MUCH PAIN WILL  
I HAVE?**

This is variable, but we provide you with an appropriate amount of narcotic pills to keep you comfortable until your first post-operative visit. You may take one pill every 6 hours as needed. You may also take 1000mg of Tylenol up to 3 times daily. Most of our patients have regional anesthesia so it is not unusual to have numbness and tingling that can be present for several days following your surgery.

**WHY IS MY SHOULDER  
"LEAKING"?**

Arthroscopy is performed by filling the shoulder with fluid, which then escapes through the small incisions (portals) — this is entirely normal after surgery.

**WHEN SHOULD I CALL  
THE OFFICE WITH  
CONCERNS?**

Any signs of infection should be reported immediately — these include increased drainage (usually thick, cloudy, not liquid secondary to the arthroscopy), redness, increased warmth and fever.

**CALL THE OFFICE AT 201.567.5700 IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING ARE PRESENT:**

- Painful swelling or numbness (note that some swelling and numbness is normal)
- Unrelenting pain
- Fever or chills (i.e.,  $\geq 100.4^{\circ}\text{F}$  — it is normal to have an elevated body temperature for the first day or two following surgery)
- Redness around incisions
- Color change in the arm, forearm or hand
- Continuous drainage or bleeding from incision (a small amount of drainage is expected)
- Difficulty breathing
- Excessive nausea/vomiting
- Calf pain

**IF YOU HAVE AN EMERGENCY THAT REQUIRES IMMEDIATE ATTENTION,  
PROCEED TO THE NEAREST EMERGENCY ROOM.**