

Brian Forsythe, M.D.
Sports Medicine
Shoulder, Elbow, Knee Arthroscopy
Shoulder Replacement Surgery

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MIDWEST
ORTHOPAEDICS
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Midwest Orthopaedics at Rush
1611 W. Harrison St, Ste 400
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Munster Indiana Office
9200 Calumet Avenue
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2011 York Road, Ste 1500
Oak Brook, IL 60523

DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS & PHYSICAL THERAPY PROTOCOL: Upper Extremity Fracture

❖ Initial recovery after shoulder surgery entails healing, controlling swelling and discomfort. The following instructions are intended as a guide to help you achieve these goals until your 1st postoperative visit.

❖ **COMFORT**

○ **Cold Therapy**

- If you elected to receive the **circulating cooling device**, this can be used continuously for the first 3 days, (while the initial post-op dressing is on). After 3 days, the cooling device should be applied 3 times a day for 20-30 minute intervals.
- If you elected to receive the **gel wrap**, this may be applied for 20 minutes on, 20 minutes off as needed. You may apply this over the post-op dressing. Once the dressing is removed, be sure to place a barrier (shirt, towel, cloth, etc.) between your skin and the gel wrap.
- If you elected to use **regular ice**, this may be applied for 20 minutes on, 20 minutes off as needed. You may apply this over the post-op dressing. Once the dressing is removed, be sure to place a barrier (shirt, towel, cloth, etc.) between your skin and the gel wrap.

○ **Medication**

- **Pain Medication-** Take medications as prescribed, but only as often as necessary. Avoid alcohol and driving if you are taking pain medication.
 - You have been provided a narcotic prescription postoperatively. Use this medication sparingly for moderate to severe pain.
 - **You are allowed two (2) refills of your narcotic prescription if necessary.**
 - When refilling pain medication, weaning down to a lower potency or non-narcotic prescription is recommended as soon as possible.
 - Extra strength Tylenol may be used for mild pain.
 - Over the counter anti-inflammatory medication (Ibuprofen, Aleve, Motrin, etc.) should be **avoided** for the first 4 weeks following surgery.

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- **Anti-coagulation medication:** A medication to prevent post-operative blood clots has been prescribed (Aspirin, Lovenox, etc.) This is the only medication that MUST be taken as prescribed until directed to stop by Dr. Forsythe.
- **Nausea Medication** – Zofran (Odansetron) has been prescribed for nausea. You may take this as needed per the prescription instructions.
- **Constipation Medication** - Colace has been prescribed for constipation. Both your pain medication and the anesthesia can cause constipation. Take this as needed.
- **Driving** – Driving is NOT permitted as long as the sling is necessary.

❖ ACTIVITIES

- You are immobilized with a splint, full time, for approximately the first 6 weeks. Your doctor can tell you when you can this at your 1st postoperative visit. The sling may be removed for exercises.
- Physical therapy will begin some time after surgery.
- Athletic activities such as throwing, lifting, swimming, bicycling, jogging, running, and stop-and-go sports should be avoided until cleared by Dr. Forsythe.

❖ WOUND CARE

- **Bathing** - Tub bathing, swimming, and soaking of the shoulder should be avoided until allowed by your doctor - Usually 2-3 weeks after your surgery. Keep the dressing on, clean and dry after surgery.
 - You may shower 3 days after surgery with WATERPROOF band-aids on. Apply new band-aids after showering.
 - Use caution when showering. Slipping or falling puts you at risk for re-injury.
- **Dressings**
 - Your sling is to remain in place at all times except when showering.
 - **If you are fitted with a splint**, it should remain on until your first postoperative appointment.

❖ EATING

- Your first few meals, after surgery, should include light, easily digestible foods and plenty of liquids, since some people experience slight nausea as a temporary reaction to anesthesia

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❖ **CALL YOUR PHYSICIAN IF:**

- Pain in your extremity persists or worsens in the first few days after surgery.
- Excessive redness or drainage of cloudy or bloody material from the wounds (Clear red tinted fluid and some mild drainage should be expected). Drainage of any kind 5 days after surgery should be reported to the doctor.
- You have a temperature elevation greater than 101°
- You have pain, swelling or redness in your arm or hand.
- You have numbness or weakness in your arm or hand.

❖ **RETURN TO THE OFFICE**

- Your first return to our office should be within the first 1-2 weeks after your surgery. You can find your appointment for this first post-operative visit in the post op instruction folder.