

Dr. Crow's Post-Op Instructions for ORIF Clavicle

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

WOUND CARE/SHOWERING

Dressings are to be kept clean and dry initially after surgery. You may remove the dressing 3 days after surgery and shower. The shower should be brief, the wounds patted dry with a clean towel. No baths or soaking the incision until 3-4 weeks after surgery and incision fully healed.

Change dressing daily until drainage stops. Leave steri-strips in place until your follow-up visit. A small amount of clear drainage or bleeding is normal initially after surgery.

If you have persistent drainage, increasing redness, or temperature of 101 or higher, please report these symptoms to your surgeon or the doctor on call.

PAIN AND SWELLING

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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.

Postoperative Pain Medication Instructions

Listed below are the typical medications prescribed for postoperative pain management after orthopedic surgery. This does not necessarily mean that you will receive all these medications, but this information can be very helpful.

Pain after surgery is expected. The goal after surgery is not to be pain free, but to make it tolerable. Some pain is beneficial as it lets our bodies know what not to do.

It is important for pain management to also to use RICE (rest, ice, compression and elevation) routinely to assist with pain and swelling.

Acetaminophen:

This medication is more commonly known as Tylenol. This medication, when combined with the other medications listed below, can amplify overall pain management. Recommended taking this on a regular schedule for baseline pain management.

Ibuprofen/Meloxicam:

NSAIDs should be taken with food on a regular basis and should not be taken with prescription blood thinners.

Narcotic Pain Medications

Tramadol/Hydrocodone/Oxycodone:

If the above pain medications do not provide adequate pain control this may be used for additional pain management and added to your scheduled regimen. Narcotic medications are stronger and used for “breakthrough pain”. Breakthrough pain is an abnormal increase in pain that is not being well covered by the above medications.

Side effects of narcotics can include constipation, nausea, confusion, cloudy thoughts, and itchiness. Make sure to stay well hydrated, be up and walk short distances frequently, and take over the counter stool softeners as long as you are taking narcotics.

As your pain improves after surgery you can wean off narcotics gradually by increasing time between doses and/or decreasing amount (i.e. cutting tablets in half).

SLING

You will be in a sling after surgery. Initially, you should always wear the sling and only remove 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.

DRIVING

To drive you must no longer be taking narcotic pain pills. Before driving, you must feel strong and alert. You also need to be able to get in and out of the car without assistance and be able to follow post-op restrictions.

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 if scheduled based on her provider orders.

FOLLOW-UP

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

Please call the office/contact us on the portal with any questions or concerns 715-832-1400