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### FREQUENTLY ASKED POST-OPERATIVE QUESTIONS (FAQ'S) FOR SHOULDER SURGERY

#### SHOULDER SLING +/- ABDUCTION PILLOW

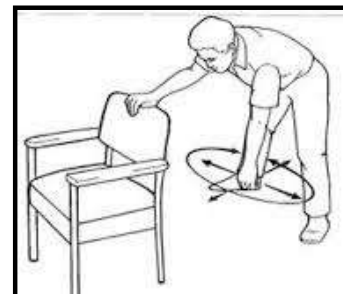
You will be wearing your sling +/- abduction pillow **AT ALL TIMES** except for hygiene or therapy.  
You will be wearing your sling +/- abduction pillow **WHILE YOU SLEEP.**

If you had a Rotator Cuff Repair or Total Shoulder Replacement, then you will have an Abduction Pillow with the sling. Use it at all times.

Length of time you will wear your sling depends on your surgery:

- Rotator Cuff Surgery - 4 to 6 weeks (depends on the strength of your repair).
- Labral surgery / Shoulder Stabilization - 4 or 5 weeks (depending on the size of the tear).
- Open Shoulder Surgery – 6 weeks
- Shoulder Fracture Fixation – 6 weeks
- Total Shoulder Replacement – 6 weeks
- Reverse Shoulder Replacement – 2 to 3 weeks

- **NO** active motion of the shoulder is allowed immediately post-operatively.
- Gentle daily shoulder pendulum (as demonstrated in the photo to the right) is **OK** to start three days after surgery. **NO PAIN.**
- Motion of the Elbow / Wrist / Hand is **OK** and **ENCOURAGED DAILY.**
- Grip exercises are also **ENCOURAGED DAILY.**
- You may use your arm to assist with dressing, eating, and personal hygiene unless specifically instructed not to by Dr. Li.



**Please take a 325mg Enteric Coated Aspirin starting on Post Operative day #1 for two weeks.**

Do not take the Aspirin if you are currently on a blood thinner (Coumadin, Plavix, etc) or have stomach pain with taking anti-inflammatory medications.

#### CRYOTHERAPY or COLD THERAPY

Cryotherapy (Cold therapy) is a **very important** part of pain control after surgery. The cold temperature will help control swelling and reduce pain. This can be done several ways – with an ice pack or a cold therapy unit. Cold therapy units are more effective in concentrating the cold to the surgical site via a molded wrap. Cold water is then circulated through the wrap, delivering cold to all sides of the joint.

Cold therapy units come 2 ways - Cold therapy only and Cold therapy with compression: Cryocuff® (cold only) – cold therapy via a molded wrap. You may elect to use only an ice pack or a Cryocuff®.



### WOUND CARE

- You may remove the Operative Dressing on Post-Operative Day # 3 (Shoulder Arthroscopy)
- You may **NOT** remove the Operative Dressing until you see Dr. Li (Shoulder Replacement or Open Shoulder Surgery)

**PLEASE DO NOT TAKE ANY PRESCRIPTION ANTI-INFLAMMATORY MEDICATION FOR 1 MONTH (i.e Naprosyn / Mobic / Celebrex / Ibuprofen) IN ADDITION TO THE ASPIRIN.**

It is **OK** to take the Aspirin (325mg) for 2 weeks post arthroscopic rotator cuff repair.

Apply Band-Aids to the wounds. **DO NOT REMOVE** the Steri-strips. Please **DO NOT USE** Bacitracin or other ointments on the incision. For larger incisions, gauze dressing may be used on the incision (you can purchase these at the local pharmacy – CVS / Walgreens / Etc.).

There may be a small amount of bleeding and/or fluid leaking at the surgical site. **This is Normal.** The shoulder is filled with fluid during surgery, sometimes causing leakage for 24-36 hours. You may change or reinforce the bandage as needed.

Use Ice or Cryocuff as often as possible for the first 7 days, then as needed for pain relief. Do not wrap the shoulder wound too thickly or the Cryocuff cold may not penetrate as well. Do not use the Cryocuff or Ice for a prolonged time directly onto the skin to avoid frostbite to the skin. Please follow the instructions.

There will be more swelling on days 1-3 than you had the day of surgery. **This is Normal.** The swelling is decreased by using Ice or Cryocuff and over time.

**You may shower on Post-Operative Day 3** using a water-tight plastic wrap over your shoulder. Using Glad Cling Wrap or Press'n Seal around a plastic bag on top wrapped with tape on either side of your shoulder to create a water tight seal is most recommended. After showering, please dry the incision area and cover with small Band-Aid (arthroscopic portal sites) or sterile gauze (open shoulder surgery or shoulder replacement)

If the incision is clean and dry **after 7 days from surgery**, you may shower with the wound exposed to the water **WITHOUT** scrubbing the area. You may gently wash the area **around** the incision with a washcloth, then gently pat the area dry.

**ALWAYS KEEP THE WOUND CLEAN AND DRY. Do not soak** the shoulder in water. **Do not go swimming** in the pool, hot tub or ocean until 4 weeks after your sutures are removed.

## Shoulder Replacement Surgery - Wound Care Instructions

If you had a Shoulder Replacement Surgery with Dr. Li and an Aquacel surgical dressing is applied to your shoulder, then you can shower 3 days after surgery with the dressing intact. These special dressings are water proof. **Do NOT remove the dressing for 7 days after surgery.** You may change the dressing on day 7 and leave open to air if the incision is clean and dry. If there is any small opening or drainage from the incision, please cover with a sterile gauze for another 7 days until you see Dr. Li's physician assistant in clinic for your first post-operative appointment.

## DRIVING INSTRUCTIONS and RESTRICTIONS

**\*\*IMPORTANT\*\* - ABSOLUTELY NO DRIVING WHILE TAKING ANY NARCOTIC PAIN MEDICATION (VICODIN / PERCOCET / OXYCODONE, etc.)** - it is against the law to operate a motor vehicle under the influence of any controlled substances (even when legally prescribed). Narcotics impair both motor ability and judgment.

As a result of your surgery, your reaction time will be greatly slowed down, impairing your physical ability to safely drive a vehicle. Therefore, if an emergency arises while attempting to drive to early – i.e. you need to slam on breaks, depress the clutch, or turn the wheel –you may not be able to react as quickly thus potentially risking harm to yourself or others.

If your **DOMINANT SHOULDER** is the operative side, you **MAY NOT DRIVE FOR 6 WEEKS**. It is important to regain adequate muscle strength and control in your dominant upper extremity and arm before attempting to shift gears or use the steering wheel.

If your **NON-DOMINANT SHOULDER** is the operative side you may drive a few days **AFTER** you finish taking your pain medication. It is important that you feel very confident in your ability to respond efficiently before attempting to drive.

**DO NOT use your operative shoulder/arm to open the car door.**

## FIRST FOLLOW-UP AFTER SURGERY

You should have your follow-up appointment scheduled at the time of the preoperative visit and prior to surgery with Dr. Li's physician assistant. If you do not have a scheduled postoperative visit, please call the office to schedule a follow-up appointment for 10-14 days after your surgery date.

- (617) 638-5633 (BMC - Shapiro Office)
- (617) 358-3400 (BU - Ryan Center)

Please bring your arthroscopic pictures (given to you in the recovery room after surgery) with you to your first postoperative visit. Dr. Li's physician assistant will review these arthroscopic pictures with you during this visit and will also outline your post-operative physical therapy protocol. Please start your physical therapy in the next week unless otherwise instructed differently by Dr. Li's physician assistant.

If you lost the physical therapy script or the protocol, please call Dr. Li's office at the numbers above and go to Dr. Li's website to get the updated PT protocol. ([www.tigerortho.com](http://www.tigerortho.com))

## **ADDITIONAL FOLLOW UP APPOINTMENTS**

Your first visit with Dr. Li after surgery is about 6 to 8 weeks from the date of your surgery. Please make appointment to see him at your 2-week post-operative visit with his physician assistant. If you bring your arthroscopic pictures with you at this visit, Dr. Li can go over all the pictures with you again in clinic.

### **CHECKLIST**

- Identify a Caregiver/family member to help with preparing meals, hygiene, dressing, and activities of daily living (cleaning, shopping, pet care, etc).
- Identify a Caregiver/family member to assist in driving you to and from appointments.
- Make your post-operative appointment (for 10-14 days after surgery) with Dr. Li's physician assistant
- Make your post-op Physical Therapy appointment (for after the 1<sup>st</sup> post-operative visit). The PT script will be given to you at the first postoperative visit.
- Have your pain medications filled at the pharmacy by your family members before you go home so that they are available for you.
- Please visit Dr. Li's website if you have any additional questions ([www.tigerortho.com](http://www.tigerortho.com))

### **PLEASE NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IMMEDIATELY IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING OCCURS**

#### **Boston Medical Center - Phone Number (617) 638-5633**

- Excessive bleeding from the incision site
- Excessive non-bloody wound drainage beyond the first 5 days from surgery
- Poor pain control with your medications
- Numbness or tingling of the hand not related to bruising.
  - If you had a shoulder block, then numbness and tingling is expected for the first 48 hours.  
Please contact the anesthesiologist if you have persistent numbness after the first 48 hours.
- Fever > 101.5° after postoperative day #3
- Increased redness along incision
- Calf pain or leg swelling
- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain
- Any other concerns /questions

