

# Dr. Matthew L. Hansen, MD

*Sports Medicine and Shoulder Specialist*

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## POST-OPERATIVE EDUCATION: SHOULDER ARTHROSCOPY

**SLING:** This is dependent on the procedure performed:

**No Tendon Repair:** You will wear a sling as needed for comfort following surgery. Depending on the procedure, you may find you will want to use it the majority of the time for up to 3 weeks.

**Rotator Cuff Repair:** You will wear a sling with a pillow at your side for 6 weeks after surgery. This is necessary to protect your shoulder while it heals properly. You may loosen your sling to move your hand, wrist and elbow after surgery, but you **MUST** keep your sling on at ALL times. Support your surgical arm even while showering, such as with a commercially available showering sling. Wear a large loose-fitting shirt around your operative arm in the sling. It is safe to remove your sling while seated and awake and rest your arm on pillows to give your neck and elbow a rest from the sling. We do want you to be up and walking around at home as much as possible after surgery.

**Biceps Tenodesis:** The Rotator Cuff Repair restrictions apply. See elbow motion restrictions outlined below.

### MOVING YOUR SHOULDER:

It is OK for you to loosen your sling and move your hand, wrist and elbow gently three times a day. You may also squeeze the ball provided on your sling with your arm in the sling. To protect a biceps tenodesis, **DO NOT** flex your biceps or triceps muscles. You can still move the elbow of the arm that was operated on under power of your other arm. You will learn your shoulder exercises when you come to our office and start physical therapy.

### ICE:

Please note that with the dressings placed during surgery, you may notice decreased benefit from the ice. Often placing the ice adjacent to the surgical site increases the effectiveness. Use as needed and if you notice benefit. See the next section for suggestions to make the ice more beneficial. Ice is most helpful in the first 3 days after surgery, but may help up to 2 weeks after surgery. We do not recommend that you use heat, as this can increase swelling.

You may use a commercially available ice bag or fill a large plastic bag with ice and water. (Do not place a plastic bag directly on your skin, rather place a towel on your shoulder in between your skin and the ice bag.) You can ice your shoulder 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off throughout the day. Do not ice an

area longer than 30 minutes at a time, as this can cause frost bite.

### **BANDAGES:**

You may remove tape and WHITE gauze the morning after surgery. Please leave the YELLOW gauze on your skin and cover with Band-Aids. You may remove the Band-Aids and gauze to shower THREE DAYS after surgery. If you have white Steri Strips, DO NOT remove them. It is OK to get your incisions wet after the bandage is removed, but it is very important not to soak the incision underwater (no bath, pool, hot tub etc.) for 3 weeks. It is OK to wash the incisions gently with soap and gently pat dry with a towel. Do not place any lotion or other ointment on your incisions. You may cover them with Band-Aids for comfort if they catch on your clothing.

### **MEDICATIONS:**

Narcotic pain medicine (such as Percocet – oxycodone or Norco – hydrocodone): Take this AS NEEDED only. Start with Percocet (stronger) if given a prescription for multiple narcotics. Transition to Norco (less potent) as your pain improves. You may stop narcotics whenever you can tolerate the pain. Do not take additional Tylenol (also called acetaminophen) with these medicines, as they already have Tylenol in them. You may SUBSTITUTE Tylenol for a narcotic pill if you choose to. Be certain that you do not exceed the maximum Tylenol dose as noted on the Tylenol bottle.

Stool softener: Pain medicines often cause constipation. It is best to take most of this medicine with some food, as it can cause a little stomach upset.

Zofran (ondansetron): You may take this medication if you are having nausea or vomiting.

Robaxin (methocarbamol): This muscle relaxer may help with spasms experienced commonly after shoulder arthroscopy. Take only if having spasms.

Do not take over-the-counter NSAIDS (Ibuprofen, Motrin, Advil, Naproxen, Aleve etc...) if any kind of a tendon repair was performed. ONLY if no tendon or labrum repair was performed: It is OK to take NSAIDs along with your pain medicine to increase the pain relief. Take as directed by the manufacturer.

### **FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENTS:**

You should have a **follow-up appointment** with your surgeon in about 2 weeks. You may also have an additional visit with the Physician Assistant within a few days of your surgery. Call (480) 964-2908 right away if you do not have an appointment already scheduled. We will check your incisions and remove any sutures at the 2-week visit. We will also answer any specific questions you may have about your surgery. You should start Physical Therapy as directed (commonly within 1-3 days of surgery), as many patients benefit from PT after shoulder surgery.

**CALL OUR OFFICE** at (480) 964-2908 with any urgent or emergent questions or concerns that you may have, or if you develop swelling in your leg with calf pain, swelling that will not go away when you elevate your leg, a temperature above 101.4, or drainage from your incisions.

If you experience high fever (above 102.5), chest pain, difficulty breathing, fainting: go to an **Emergency**

**Department** close to your house.