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TOTAL SHOULDER DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS

Kenneth J. Westerheide, M.D.

(614) 545-7900

1. **DRESSING:** It is not uncommon to have leakage of fluid into and around the dressing the first 48 hours. Reinforce the dressing with gauze until the first dressing change. You can change your surgical dressing 48 hours after surgery. Begin by removing the tape and all of the bulky padding. First wipe betadine swab on top of the steri-strips or staples; then apply gauze and paper tape over the incision (betadine, gauze and paper tape are all available at any pharmacy). This can be changed once per day until you return to our office for your first post-operative visit.
2. **SHOWERING:** Although the dressings are in place over the incision site, you must still protect them from getting wet for the first 2 weeks. You may shower 48 hours after surgery, using plastic wrap and a dry folded towel or Glad Press N Seal over the shoulder to protect the dressing. Generally, the incision site may get wet in a shower at 2 weeks and submerged in a bathtub, pool or Jacuzzi at 3 weeks after surgery.
3. **SWELLING:** It is common to experience some swelling or drainage after surgery, but this fluid should be reabsorbed within the first few days after surgery. Ice can be used on your shoulder as often as you'd like, until the bulky dressing is removed. Then ice can be applied for 20 minutes at a time as often as needed for pain and swelling. It will be helpful to use ice following your exercises and physical therapy. If you were provided with a circulating cold therapy unit, this can be used continuously or as often as desired for comfort.
4. **SLING/BRACE:** If you were provided with the pillow sling, this should remain in place at all times other than for doing your exercises, bathing and dressing. The sling is usually required for 6 weeks after a total shoulder replacement.
5. **EXERCISES:** Exercises are an important part of your recovery. You can start your exercises the day after surgery, depending on your comfort. It is important to release your forearm from the sling in order to do the wrist, elbow and sawing exercises. Squeezing a small ball is a helpful way to alleviate swelling and stiffness of the wrist and fingers. If these exercises produce significant pain, stop the exercises and check with your physician. Driving should not be performed until authorized by your physician.

6. MEDICATIONS: You will be prescribed the following medication to be used after surgery at home.
 1. Norco (Hydrocodone): A Narcotic pain reliever. Take 1-2 tablets every 4-6 hours as needed for pain. Do not exceed 10 tablets in a 24-hour period.

Keep in mind that the Norco will cause drowsiness and should not be used with alcohol or if driving. Taking this medication on an empty stomach can result in an upset stomach. It is common to feel the most discomfort when lying down to sleep at night, so you may find it beneficial to take the medication at bedtime. If unusual side effects occur, please discontinue the medication and contact our office. When additional refills are needed, please call our office during business hours. Ibuprofen (Motrin or Advil) can be taken alternating with the Norco or in place of it. You will want to take 600mg by mouth 3 times a day with food.

7. SIGNS OF INFECTIONS: With any surgery it is important to be aware of any signs of infection, which can include: unusual looking or smelling drainage (green/yellow), increased redness and tenderness around the incision site, or fever (i.e. 101 degrees or above) and chills. Also, be aware of excessive bleeding or continued numbness and tingling. If you experience any of these symptoms, please call our office. There is a doctor on call 24 hours a day.
8. POST-OP APPOINTMENT: You should call the office to schedule a post-operative appointment for 7-14 days after your surgery, if an appointment has not already been scheduled. The appointment desk can be reached at (614) 545-7900. Please make the scheduler aware that this is your first post-operative visit. At this appointment x-rays may be taken, your dressing will be changed, and Dr. Westerheide and/or his Physician Assistant, Tom Hunt, PA-C will examine you. Activity and physical therapy will be discussed at this time. Outpatient physical therapy generally begins 2-6 weeks after surgery and continues for 4-12 weeks based on your progress and surgical procedure performed.
9. QUESTIONS: If you have any additional questions, please contact our office.