



PATIENT POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

Dear Patient

Please read this handout before you leave hospital

Prior to discharge you will have had the following done:

- Dressing changed to a waterproof dressing
- Instruction by nursing staff on how to shower and get dressed – in all cases the operated upper arm must be kept as close as possible to the body though you can move your elbow, wrist and hand as required. You should have been given a linen sling to wear in the shower.
- If I have recommended immediate postoperative physiotherapy the physio should have instructed you in 2 exercises that you must do 4 times a day by yourself at home. You do not need to see a physio when you get home – I will advise you when this is required at your first postoperative visit.
- You will be given 3 types of medication:
 - Analgesics to be taken as required
 - Sleeping tablets to be taken if needed
 - Antibiotics which must be taken until packet finished

If any of these have not been done please check with the nursing staff

Do not forget to take your x-rays and MRIs home with you

In the immediate post operative period you will experience pain about the shoulder. There will also be significant pain at night as a result of the surgery. Please use the analgesics as well as tablets to help you sleep at night, if needed. Should you require extra tablets, either let my office know or see your family doctor.

You will have a “see through” dressing over the wound made out of a substance called “duoderm”. This is a waterproof dressing that allows you to shower without compromising the sterility of the wound. You will notice under the dressing there will be a white material that looks like pus. This is the perspiration of your skin reacting with the medication in the dressing and is nothing to worry about. The dressing should not be changed.

It is common to get swelling about the arm, forearm, hand and fingers. Clicking and noises around the shoulder are common.

Endeavour to keep the armpit as dry as possible – once the wound has healed at about 7 days you can use talcum powder which will help. Please wash around the shoulder and armpit with PhisoHex soap.

When to contact me before I have removed your stitches:

- Fever above 38° Celsius (use a thermometer)
- Increased pain unrelieved with pain medications
- Sudden, severe shoulder pain
- Increased redness around the incision
- Increased swelling at the incision
- A bulge that can be felt at the shoulder
- Shoulder pain, tenderness or swelling
- Numbness or tingling in the arm
- Change in colour and temperature of the arm
- Change in motion ability
- Drainage or odour from the incision
- Any significant concerns you have

The sling will need to remain on until I see you in the office at about 7 to 10 days postoperatively. The sling must remain on 24 hours a day, including at night. The sling only comes off to have a shower and get dressed and on those occasions the arm needs to be kept adjacent to the body. If you have been given an exercise program the sling is taken off to do the exercises.

You can freely move your elbow, hand and wrist providing the upper arm remains adjacent to the body.

The Roads and Traffic Authority does not permit driving of a motor vehicle while you are in a sling. I therefore recommend you do not drive until you are out of the sling.

Please ring the office to make your postoperative appointment – I will have advised you when I need to see you.

Should there be a problem postoperatively call the office where you were seen – during business hours or out of hours problems – contact the hospital where you had your surgery and they will contact me.

J. GOLDBERG shoulder surgery
R. PATTINSON paediatric, general
A. TURNBULL hip, knee
T. GOTHELF foot, ankle, shoulder, elbow

W. BRUCE hip, knee
A. LOEFLER hip, knee, spine
P. WALKER hip, knee

D. SHER shoulder, elbow, knee
J. NEGRINE foot, ankle
I. POPOFF knee, shoulder, general
J. TRANTALIS shoulder, elbow

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