



Dr. Joshua Alpert
Post-Operative Surgery Instructions:
Shoulder Arthroscopy: Rotator Cuff Repair

Immediately After Surgery in the Recovery Room:

- After surgery you will be taken to the recovery room, where your family can meet you. You will have a sling on your operated extremity. The sling should stay on whenever you are on your feet or sleeping but can be removed when resting and sitting at home.
- You may have a cooling device on your shoulder. This is used to reduce pain and swelling.
- **DO NOT LIFT THE ARM FOR THE FIRST 6 WEEKS.** This is to allow the tendon to heal. However, it is encouraged that you move your elbow, wrist, and fingers as much as possible to increase circulation. If you have had a nerve block, that may not be possible on the recovering extremity for up to 24 hours.
- A nerve block has been used to decrease pain in your knee and will wear off after surgery anywhere between 6-24 hours. This can vary significantly by individual.
- You will receive a prescription for pain medication for your return home. We recommend taking the first dose immediately when getting home, then as needed. Please note that common side effects of the pain medication are nausea and constipation. Any over the counter stool softener will work for constipation. If you have intolerable nausea, please call our office to discuss further.

After Surgery at Home:

- The large dressing can be removed at home 24 hours after the surgery. You will see small band-aids called steri-strips that look like pieces of tape covering the incision. These can get wet without an issue, and they should remain on until they fall off on their own.

- You may shower after 24 hours, and it is safe to get the wound wet. No soaking the wound (no baths/pools/hot tubs) until the wound is completely healed. To clean the operative armpit, lean over in the shower and let the arm naturally fall away from your body (similar to pendulum swings). The key is not to *actively* lift the arm at this point in recovery.
- Ice or use the cooling device as necessary for 3-7 days. Cooling helps reduce pain, swelling, and inflammation. When you notice it is no longer offering any benefit, feel free to stop using it.
- For your comfort and the protection of the shoulder, the sling is usually necessary for 4 weeks, unless otherwise instructed by your surgeon.
- Pain medication: We will not call in medication refills after 5pm or on the weekend. Please let our office know during business hours when a refill is needed, and we will call it in per office policy.
- Physical therapy recommendations will be made during your first office visit after surgery.

First Post-Op Office Visit:

- Please arrange to see Dr. Alpert or his PAs Christina or Joe in the office 3-10 days after surgery.
- Physical therapy recommendations will be made at your first postoperative visit. An initial prescription is usually 2-3 times a week for 6 weeks. The total amount of physical therapy you may need can last up to 6 months.
- If you have any questions or concerns regarding your surgery or the rehabilitation protocol, please contact Dr. Alpert's office at 224.293.1170 and ask for Christina (PA), Joe (PA), or Nikki (secretary).

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