

POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

Please read carefully and follow the instructions circled or checked for your procedure.

Activities

1. Weight bearing on the affected limb: ☐ As tolerated ☐ Non-weight-bearing
2. Special instructions: _____
3. Begin exercises: ☐ Post-op day 1 ☐ No exercises until follow-up
4. Follow the circled instructions on the home exercise handout.

Wound Care

Note: If you had a total shoulder replacement, you have a special dressing — leave it in place until your follow-up appointment.

- 1 Keep incisions clean and dry for the first 48 hours after surgery. Remove dressings after 48 hours. Leave steri-strips in place if present (small white strips over the incision).
- 2 Change dressings daily with a fresh dressing or bandage.
- 3 If a splint or cast is applied, keep it dry and do not remove it unless instructed by the physician.
- 4 You may shower after 48 hours. Gently wash the incisions with soap and water, then cover with a fresh dressing.
- 5 No tub baths, swimming pools, or hot tubs for at least 3 weeks after surgery. Avoid direct sun on the incision while healing.
- 6 Ice and elevate the surgical site at least 3 times a day — 20 minutes on, 20 minutes off. Do not apply ice directly to the skin (use a thin barrier) to avoid frostbite.
- 7 If using a cryotherapy machine, follow the manufacturer's instructions.

Medications

1. Resume all previously prescribed medications as ordered by your doctor.
2. Take any prescribed pain medication only as needed. Avoid alcohol while taking pain medication. If none was prescribed, extra-strength Tylenol is usually sufficient.

Prescribed for you (checked):

- ☐ Colace 100 mg — 1 tablet twice daily while taking narcotic pain medication
- ☐ Zofran 8 mg — every 8 hours as needed for nausea or vomiting
- ☐ Aspirin 81 mg — 1 tablet once daily for 14 days
- ☐ Percocet 5/325 — 1 to 2 tablets every 6 hours for pain, not to exceed 8 tablets per day
- ☐ Tramadol 50 mg — every 6 hours as needed for pain
- ☐ Keflex 500 mg — twice daily
- ☐ Valium 5 mg — every 6 hours as needed for muscle spasm



Follow-Up Care

1. Within 7–10 days after surgery, call the office at (305) 393-8810 to schedule your post-operative appointment if one is not already scheduled.
2. Call the office at (305) 393-8810 if you experience any of the following:
 - Pain at the surgical site that persists or worsens in the first few days after surgery.
 - Excessive redness or drainage — especially yellow, green, or foul-smelling — or cloudy or bloody material around the incision.
 - A temperature over 101°F with no apparent cause, or pain, swelling, redness, numbness, or weakness in the surgical limb.

For about 24 hours after anesthesia it is normal to feel drowsy or dizzy, or to have muscle aches, a sore throat, or a mild headache.

Do not: stay alone for the first 24 hours; drink alcohol for 24 hours or while taking narcotic pain medication.

Do: eat light foods and drink fluids as tolerated; bring your surgical (arthroscopic) images to your post-op appointment.

Crutches

If your surgery involved the lower extremity, you may need crutches — temporarily or until instructed otherwise.

Position & height

- The tops of the crutches should sit 1–2 inches below your armpits when standing.
- Adjust the handgrips so they are even with your hip; your elbows should be slightly bent.
- Rest your weight on your hands, not your armpits — leaning on the underarm supports can cause discomfort and nerve irritation.

Walking

- Lean forward and place the crutches about one foot ahead of you.
- Shift your weight onto the crutches as if stepping with the injured leg.
- Bring your body through the crutches and finish the stride with your good leg.
- To sit, back up to the chair and lower yourself slowly; stand using your good leg.
- On stairs, lead with your good leg going up and your injured leg going down. Use handrails, and have someone carry your crutches if needed.