



Dr. Hagan Shoulder Surgery Post-Op Care

Arthroscopy

Arthroscopy allows the orthopaedic surgeon to insert a pencil-thin device with a small lens and lighting system into tiny excisions to look inside the joint. The images inside the joint are relayed to a TV monitor, allowing the doctor to make a diagnosis. Other surgical instruments can be inserted to make repairs. According to the American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine, more than 1.4 million shoulder arthroscopies are performed worldwide each year.

Open Surgery

Open surgery may be necessary and, in some cases, may be associated with better results than arthroscopy. Open surgery often can be through small incisions of just a few inches. Recovery and rehabilitation is related to the type of surgery performed inside the shoulder, rather than whether there was an arthroscopic or open surgical procedure.

Possible Complications After Surgery

After surgery, some pain, tenderness, and stiffness are normal. You should be alert for certain signs and symptoms that may suggest the development of complications. Contact our office if any of the following occur:

- Fever (101° or above) after the second day following surgery
- Increasing pain or swelling
- Redness, warmth, or tenderness which may suggest a wound infection
- Unusual bleeding (some surgical wound drainage is normal)
- Numbness or tingling of the arm or hand

After Surgery

Surgical Bandages: Leave *in place* and *dry* until your first post-op visit (10-12 days after surgery). Bandages, along with sutures, will be removed at your post-op visit. You may shower once the bandages and sutures are removed. These bandages may become wet with clear to pinkish fluid. This is entirely normal. Do *not* let your physical therapist remove bandages before seeing your doctor. If, for some reason, your bandages become wet or disrupted, please call your doctor.

Polar Pack: The hospital will send you home with an ice unit for your shoulder. This is to be used as much as possible for the first 48-72 hours post surgery to help with pain and swelling. Please be cautious to always have a towel or barrier between your skin and the polar pack to avoid skin irritation or frostbite. Please return the polar pack to our office at your first post-op visit.

Sleeping: Sleep difficulties are a very common problem after surgery. You may be more comfortable sleeping in a recliner or propping the affected limb up on several pillows in bed. You may need to experiment with different sleeping positions. Expect to awaken several times during the night for the first two to three weeks after surgery.

Shoulder Immobilizer: The hospital will send you home with a shoulder immobilizer or brace. Unless informed otherwise by your doctor, the shoulder immobilizer or brace is to be worn at all times for six weeks following surgery. You may remove the immobilizer or brace to occasional move your fingers, wrist, or elbow.

Physical therapy: It is important that you continue a shoulder exercise program with daily stretching and strengthening. In general, patients who faithfully comply with the therapies and exercises prescribed by their orthopaedic surgeon and physical therapist will have the best medical outcome after surgery. Typically, physical therapy is started 2-3 days after surgery, for 2-3 visits per week. Contact our office if you have any questions about setting up physical therapy. Depending on your surgery, physical therapy can last up to 16 weeks.

Pain Medication: If you were given pain medication, please take as directed. It is best to eat something before taking pain medications, as they may upset your stomach. If your pain medications are not adequately relieving your pain, contact our office immediately. Remember, some pain is to be expected after surgery. It is our office policy that narcotic (pain medication) refills will *not* be made after office hours. If you know you are running out of your pain medication, please call during business hours *only*.

*For more information about your specific diagnosis or surgery, www.orthoinfo.org is a helpful resource, supported by the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons.

You will need to call the office for a follow up appointment 10-12 days after surgery.

If you have any questions, please contact our office:

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