

Upper Extremity Surgery

Discharge Instructions

Paul G. Kiritsis

Please take the time to review the following instructions before you leave the hospital and use them as guidelines during your recovery from surgery. If you have any questions you may contact my office at (804) 379-2414.

Wound Care/Dressing Changes:

_____ Do not remove your dressings or get them wet.

_____ You may change your dressing as needed. Beginning 2 days after you are discharged from the hospital you should change your dressing daily. A big, bulky dressing isn't necessary as long as there isn't any drainage from the incisions. You can put a band-aid or a piece of gauze over each incision. It isn't necessary to apply antibiotic ointment to your incisions. Sutures will be removed at your one week post-op visit. Staples (if you have them) are removed in two weeks. If you have steri-strips over your incision they will start to peel off in 7-10 days as you get them wet. They don't need to be removed prior to that. When they begin to peel off, you may remove them. They should all be removed by 14 days from you surgery.

Showering/Bathing:

_____ You may **shower 2 days after surgery**. You may shower if there is no drainage from your incisions. Your dressing may be removed for showering. You may get your incisions wet in the shower. Don't vigorously scrub your incisions. Apply a clean, dry dressing after you have dried your incisions. Do not take a bath or get into a swimming pool or Jacuzzi until the incisions are completely healed. This may take about 14 days. **Do not soak your incisions under water.**

_____ Do not remove your dressings or get them wet until you are seen at your follow-up appointment with Dr. Kiritsis. You will be given further instructions at that time.

Sling:

_____ You are not required to wear your sling and should do so only as needed for comfort. You have no restrictions with regards to the movement of your shoulder. Please push to achieve full range of motion as soon as possible. You may resume your normal daily activities immediately and return to work as soon as you feel appropriate.

_____ Keep your arm in the immobilizer at all times except when showering and changing your clothes. When showering or changing, keep your arm at your side. Don't move it away from your body.

_____ Keep your arm in the immobilizer at all times except when showering, changing your clothes and doing the **exercises shown to you by Dr. Kiritsis or your physical therapist** prior to your discharge from the hospital. Keep your arm at your side when changing your clothes and showering. Don't move it away from your body.

Ice / Elevation

Continue ice consistently for 48 hours after surgery. After 48 hours, you should ice your shoulder 3 times per day, for 20 minutes at a time for the next 5 days. After one week from surgery, you may use ice as needed for pain and swelling.

Diet:

You may advance to your regular diet as tolerated. Increase your clear liquid intake for the next 2 to 3 days.

Medication:

1. You will be given a prescription for pain medication when you are discharged from the hospital. Take the medication as needed according to the directions on the prescription bottle. Possible side effects of the medication include dizziness, headache, nausea, vomiting, constipation and urinary retention. If you experience any of these side effects call the office so that we can assist you in relieving them. Discontinue the use of the pain medication if you develop itching, rash, shortness of breath or difficulties swallowing. If these symptoms become severe or aren't relieved by discontinuing the medication you should seek immediate medical attention.

**Refills of pain medication are authorized during office hours only.
(8 AM –5 PM Mon. thru Fri.)**

2. If you were prescribed Percocet/oxycodone or Dilaudid/hydromorphone you must have a written prescription. These medications legally cannot be called in to the pharmacy.
3. You may take over the counter Ibuprofen/Advil/Aleve between dosages of your pain medication if needed. Do not take Tylenol in addition to your pain medication as most of the pain medication already contains Tylenol. Do not exceed 4000mg of Tylenol per day. Ex: (hydrocodone 5/500mg = 500 mg of Tylenol)
4. You may resume the medication you were taking prior to your surgery. Pain medication may change the effects of any antidepressant medication you are taking. If you have any questions about possible interactions between your regular medications and the pain medication you should consult the physician who prescribes your regular medications.

Follow Up Appointment:

Please call 379-2414 for a follow appointment with Dr. Kiritsis _____ from the time of your surgery. Please let our scheduler know you are scheduling a post-op appointment.

Physical Therapy:

_____ If you already have a therapy appointment, please be sure to attend you sessions as scheduled. If you do not have physical therapy scheduled, please call Dr. Kiritsis’ office to set up your first appointment as soon as possible.

_____ Physical Therapy will be discussed with you at your first follow-up appointment with Dr. Kiritsis. You don’t need to begin physical therapy prior to that.

_____ Begin physical therapy with your Home Health Physical Therapy. This will be set up for you before you leave the hospital.

Important Signs and Symptoms:

If any of the following signs and symptoms occur, you should contact Dr. Kiritsis’ office. Please be advised if a problem arises which you feel requires immediate medical attention or you are unable to contact Dr. Kiritsis’ office you should seek immediate medical attention at the emergency department or other health care facility you have access to.

Signs and symptoms to watch for include:

1. A sudden increase in swelling and /or redness or warmth at the area your surgery was performed **which isn’t relieved by rest, ice and elevation.**
2. Oral temperature greater than 101 degrees for 12 hours or more which isn’t relieved by an increase in fluid intake and taking two Tylenol every 4-6 hours.
3. Excessive drainage from your incisions, or drainage which hasn’t stopped by 72 hours after your surgery.
4. Fever, chills, shortness of breath, chest pain, nausea, vomiting or other signs and symptoms which are of concern to you.

Other Instructions:
