
Post-Operative Instructions

Pain Management:

- Post operative pain is best controlled with multi-modal treatment. This typically involves a combination of some or all of the following medications/injections: Regional nerve blocks (interscalene nerve block), NSAID's, acetaminophen, narcotic medications, and/or gabapentin.
- Medication prescriptions will be provided at the time of your surgical procedure.
- Do not drink alcohol while taking pain medication.
- Icing the affected area can be very effective in controlling swelling and inflammation and can also be effective in helping to control pain.
- ***Note: Exceeding the maximum amount of pain medicine, Tylenol/acetaminophen or taking alcohol with these medicines can lead to liver failure and death.***

Ice:

- It is recommended that you ice frequently for the first 72 hours following surgery.
- Keep a layer (shirt or dressing) between the ice and your skin to avoid frost bite.

Diet:

- Following surgery, nausea is very common. Begin with clear liquids and progress to your daily diet as tolerated.

Medications:

- Resume your pre-surgical medications unless instructed otherwise.

Wound Care:

- Increasing pain, increasing redness around your incision or yellow, thick drainage, more than 3 days following surgery, is concerning and should be reported to your surgeon.
- Change your dressing the second day following surgery.
- Swelling and bruising is common following surgery; don't be concerned.

Bathing:

- You may shower 24 hours after your surgery. Simply allow the water to run over the incisions and blot dry.
- Do not submerge the operative site in water such as a bath tub or hot tub until cleared by your physician.

Activity:

- You are encouraged to walk in a controlled environment.
- Driving may be resumed when you are off narcotic pain medications and feel you can safely control your vehicle.
- No physical therapy unless otherwise instructed by your surgeon.

Work:

- Ask your surgeon when you can return to work after your surgery.

Common Post-Surgical Issues:

Constipation:

- This means difficulty with bowel movements. This is very common following surgery and is related to decreased level of activity and narcotic pain medication.
- Some things that can be helpful in addressing this issue:
 - Minimize use of narcotic pain medicine
 - Fluids: Drink a lot of water or Gatorade
 - Walking
 - Foods high in fiber or prune juice.

Difficulty Urinating:

- May develop temporarily following surgery, this is typically seen in men.
- This problem should be monitored by the post-surgical nurses; however, if you are discharged home and unable to urinate (pee), you will need to go to the emergency room or contact your urologist.

Nausea:

- The feeling that you are going to throw up is a common post-surgical issue typically related to general anesthesia and narcotic pain medication.
- The following can help:
 - Minimize narcotic pain meds
 - Avoid carbonated drinks
 - Avoid dairy
 - Start with bland foods such as chicken soup.

Itching:

- This generally represents an allergic reaction to either a new medication or the tape from your dressing.
 - If the itching and rash is around your dressing you may take off your dressing.
- Benadryl (over the counter) can be helpful. The dose is 25-50mg every 8 hours.
- If the rash does not improve notify your surgeon.
- If you develop a more severe reaction such as wheezing, chest tightness or shortness of breath go to the emergency room immediately.

Questions:

- If you have any problems or concerns please contact Lake Cook Orthopedics and speak with a nurse or physician assistant. They will be in contact with your physician to make sure the issue is addressed.
- Don't hesitate to call. Problems are often simply addressed when caught early but can become more difficult to address at a later date.

Follow-up appointment:

- Your follow-up appointments should have been scheduled prior to your surgery (see attached page).