

Preparing for your Shoulder Arthroscopy

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Preparations for the days and weeks prior to your procedure

- **Obtain preoperative labs, xrays, EKGs, and medical clearance** as advised by your surgeon or other physician. These diagnostic tests are typically performed at Sage West Lander or Riverton.
- **Discontinue use of aspirin and NSAIDs** (ibuprofen, Advil, Motrin, naproxen, Aleve) 10 days prior to your planned surgery. These medications may cause increased bleeding during the operation or postoperative period. If aspirin, Plavix, Coumadin or another blood-thinning drug is prescribed for a specific health condition, please discuss with your physician. There are exceptions to this guideline, so please ask if you are unsure. Often, you may resume taking these medications the first day following surgery.
- **Decrease smoking/nicotine use.** Smoking and nicotine use impair postoperative healing and increase risks of various complications related to surgery and anesthesia.
- Discontinue herbal supplements ten days prior to surgery, as these may interact unpredictably with anesthesia medications.

Arrangements for the day of surgery

- Sage West surgery department should contact you the day before your surgery to confirm the time of your procedure and when you are expected to arrive at the hospital. If you have not heard from the surgical staff by 3PM on the day preceding your procedure, please contact Fremont Orthopaedics.
- **Nothing to eat or drink past midnight the evening prior to surgery**, unless advised otherwise. You may take daily medications with sips of water only.
- **Diabetic patients:** please do not take insulin or oral hypoglycemic meds the day of surgery.
- Take a **shower** the evening before and/or the morning of your surgery. Wash your operative arm with gentle soap. Avoid harsh scrubbing. You will be advised to avoid getting your incisions wet for 72 hours following surgery.
- DO NOT SHAVE the operative area.
- Wear glasses rather than contacts; leave jewelry and valuables at home.
- Most patients will be discharged home the day of their procedure. You will have the chance to discuss your surgery with

the surgeon both before and after your procedure. **You will NOT be allowed to drive after surgery. A responsible adult must be able to drive you home and accompany you through the night after surgery.** It is preferable that the adult who will be your primary caregiver accompanies you to the hospital the day of surgery so that the surgeon can communicate operative results and plan for followup care effectively. This person will also need to participate in discharge teaching by the surgery staff. Most patients have impaired memory of the postoperative period, which necessitates the presence and supervision of a responsible adult.

- Your actual surgical time will be 2-3 hours. Preoperative preparations, postoperative recovery and discharge teaching will take several hours beyond that.
- You will likely receive a prescription for medication the day of surgery. This prescription can be filled by the adult accompanying you while you are in the operating room.
- After surgery, your shoulder incisions will be covered with gauze and clear adhesive bandages (Tegaderm). This dressing is to remain on the incisions

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for 72 or more hours following your procedure. Your arm will be in a shoulder sling. **Bring a loose-fitting button-down or zippered shirt**, as this will be much easier to put on your operative arm when you are ready to be discharged home.

Anticipating your rehabilitation needs after surgery

- Activity restrictions following shoulder surgery are quite strict in order to allow the repaired tissues to heal. **Typically, you will not be allowed to carry anything, lift anything, reach overhead or side to side with your operative arm for at least 6 weeks.** This means that you will be performing activities of daily living with the use of one arm. Prior to surgery, it is helpful to anticipate this by arranging your most commonly used items in the kitchen, bedroom, and bathroom in easy to reach places. You may also want to identify items of clothing that will be easier to dress in with one usable arm.
- Most shoulder arthroscopy will require the patient to wear a **shoulder sling with a pillow nearly 24 hours a day for approximately 6 weeks after surgery.**
- Using only one arm is a significant disruption in daily life. You should arrange to have an **adult caregiver available the majority of the first week after surgery.** Initially, you will need help with dressing, bathing, cooking, and bandage changes. After this time, patients become remarkably smoother and more efficient performing tasks with one arm independently.



- You will be able to eat and drink what you feel like after surgery. We recommend that you start “little and light” with foods such as broth, crackers, toast, Jello, juice, and soda, as the anesthesia medications may cause your stomach to be upset. If you are tolerating light foods well you may progress to eating whatever feels good.
- **For the first 3-7 days following surgery, we will want you to spend several 30-40 minute sessions a day icing your surgical shoulder.** This will help to control postoperative swelling and pain. It is easiest to apply ice in a form that will mold to your shoulder, i.e. gel ice packs or bags of crushed ice. Never apply ice to bare skin. Circulating cold water machines are very helpful, but may be costly. Some patients are able to borrow one from a friend or family member.
- Return to work and school following these procedures is patient specific. You should anticipate **a minimum of 3-5 days of dedicated recuperation** and then gradually advance your activities based on how you are feeling. However, you will need to wear the

sling and follow your activity restrictions for 6 or more weeks, despite returning to school or your place of business. It may be helpful to discuss this with your employer now.

- During the entire time you are taking narcotic medication you should not drive, drink alcohol or be responsible for tasks that require judgment, coordination, insight, or short term memory, i.e. operating heavy power machinery, childcare, legal/financial decision making.
- You will see the surgeon for **your first postoperative appointment 1.5-2 weeks following surgery.** At this time, your stitches are usually removed from your incisions. Fremont Orthopaedics will schedule your followup appointment prior to your surgery.
- **Physical therapy is typically prescribed following shoulder surgery.** The frequency and duration may vary among patients, but in general, you should expect to begin PT within 1-2 weeks following surgery and to attend therapy sessions 1-2 times a week for 2-3 months. For some patients, PT will be helpful for several months.
- **Attendance at therapy sessions and participation in your home rehabilitation program is key to a successful recovery!** Your therapist will provide you with instructions.

Questions or Concerns:

Should you develop any new health issues prior to your surgery or if you have further questions or concerns, please call Fremont Orthopaedics at (307)332-9720.

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