

Jeffrey B. Witty, M.D.
North Oaks Orthopaedic Specialty Center
Hammond, LA 70403
Day phone: (985) 230 – 2663
After hours number: (985) 345 - 2700
Fax: (985) 230 – 2665
Website: drjeffreywitty.com



Postoperative Instructions for Clavicle Fracture Open Reduction and Internal Fixation:

Important Phone Numbers:

- Please see the contact information above for important phone numbers to call.
- If you have concerns after hours, please call the “After hours number” to reach our on-call services.

Physician Followup:

- Appointments for post surgery followup can be made one of two ways.
 - o Either call the day phone number above to make an appointment with the doctor yourself.
 - o The nursing staff at our facility can make the appointment for you
 - o The time to your first followup will be confirmed prior to leaving for the day.
 - o Follow up with Dr. Witty is about 1 week after surgery.

Precautions/Weightbearing:

- Do not place any weight through your shoulder or hand.
- The sling should remain on AT ALL TIMES, including sleeping with the exception of showers and when you start therapy to the shoulder.
- You can start to move your elbow, wrist, and hand while in the sling and while the sling is off for showers. Move the elbow while the arm is at the side. Do not move the shoulder itself.

Sling:

- Use your sling at all times immediately after surgery for comfort
- The sling is typically used for 2 – 4 weeks after surgery.

Physical Therapy:

- Unless otherwise specified, formal therapy will not start until after your first postoperative visit

Recovery at Home:

- 1) If you are discharged the day of surgery, the first meal at home should be clear liquids. Slowly increase to other easily tolerated meals (ex. Soup) to prevent any nausea. Taking your pain medication with some food may help.

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- 2) After shoulder surgery, it is common for patients to feel more comfortable sitting propped up with pillows or in a recliner for at least a few weeks after surgery. You may feel more comfortable sleeping in a recliner or similar position until that time.
- 3) Take the pain medication right when you begin to feel even the slightest amount of pain in order to “get ahead” of the pain. Apply ice to help with pain (see section on ice packs below).
- 4) You may start to move your hand, wrist, and elbow while in the sling.
- 5) If you begin to have worsening pain or swelling, redness, temperature greater than 100.4, or drainage from your incision, call Dr. Witty’s office immediately at the number listed above.
- 6) Try to get up and move around as much as possible after surgery.

Ice:

- 1) Ice (cryotherapy) can be applied to the shoulder immediately after surgery to help with postoperative pain and swelling. In fact, some studies show that ice treatment is just as beneficial as pain medication. Commercial cooler type devices attached to a cuff that wraps on the shoulder are helpful, but icing can be performed using standard ice packs.
- 2) Place a small hand towel (or similar) to the shoulder and then place the pack/device on top. This will help prevent the dressing from getting wet from condensation. It will also help from the skin frostbite especially when any local numbing injection has been used.
- 3) Apply the ice pack as often as you would like to help minimize pain and swelling. Because you may not be able to feel how cold the skin is getting, please remember to check the skin often. If you have had a nerve block, it may be difficult to tell how cold the skin is while the nerve block is in effect. It is common to use the ice packs for the first few months after surgery when the shoulder gets sore, especially after therapy.

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Wound Care and Dressing Change: (Images below are examples of dressings used and may not exactly reflect the surgical incision used in your particular case)

- 1) Typically your dressing will consist of white gauze and white tape. It may seem a little bulky on your shoulder. Leave this dressing and tape on for 3 days. During that 3-day period, reinforce the dressing if needed with more gauze and tape directly on top of the initial postop dressings. At the end of 3 days, you may remove the tape and the gauze. You may see more white gauze, and underneath that you may see yellow gauze on top of stitches. You may have absorbable stitches that are under the skin with small clear “tails” on each end of the incision. In some cases, you may have non-absorbable stitches that you can see along the incision itself. You may remove the yellow gauze. Replace clean/fresh white “4x4” gauze or similar dressings over the incisions and re-tape. See the images below.



- 2) Another type of dressing used are “Steri-strips”. They are tape like adhesives. They will typically begin to peel off on their own after a week or so and then you can remove them completely. See image below.

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- 3) Replace the dressing daily until the day you have no spots or drainage on the gauze. You can use either similar gauze and tape that was in place right after surgery, or you can use absorbent adhesive dressings that are sealed on all four sides that are available from Walgreens or CVS type stores.

Shower / Bathing:

- Avoid showers or bathing until your first postoperative visit in order to keep the incision from getting wet