

Jeffrey B. Witty, M.D.
North Oaks Orthopaedic Specialty Center
Hammond, LA 70403
Day phone: (985) 230 – 2663
After hours number: (985) 345 - 2700
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Postoperative Instructions for Clavicle Fracture Open Reduction Internal Fixation (ORIF):

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. At the appropriate time, you will remove the sling to work on therapy.
- Use the other, non-injured side, to help lower the arm down out of the sling for showers and to raise the elbow back up to go back into the sling as needed.

Sling:

- A simple sling without a pillow at the side is typically used after surgery to support the shoulder. The arm should rest comfortably in the sling as shown.

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How to Apply Your Shoulder Sling:

Note:

Please see drjeffreywitty.com and go to “Patient Info and Education >> Patient Education Videos” and watch “How to Apply Shoulder Sling” for details on how to apply your sling by yourself without need for a second person.

The sling in the online video demonstrates a pillow sling. The sling after your clavicle surgery does not typically utilize the pillow but the same tips will apply.

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Step 1:

Place sling on a surface at least at hip height and stand next to it. The sling should be open so you can lower the forearm into the support.



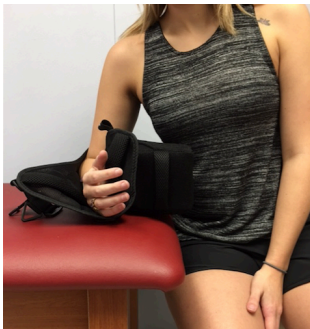
Step 2:

Lean over toward the sling while supporting injured arm with the opposite arm.



Step 3:

Lower the arm into the sling.

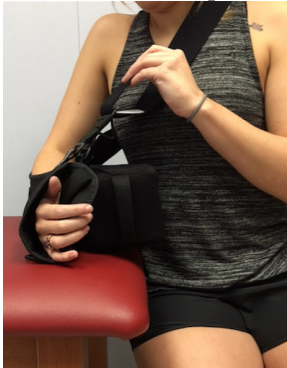


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Step 4:

Secure the strap for the forearm support and the strap around the neck.



Step 5:

Clip the final strap to the appropriate location on your individual sling.



Nerve Block Information:

- The anesthesia team may have placed a nerve block prior to surgery. The anesthesia team will discuss this with you.
- A nerve block is a procedure where numbing medication is injected around the nerves that travel to your shoulder.
- Depending on the type of block, 1 – 3 days of pain relief may be expected. During that time, the shoulder may feel numb and you may even be unable to move the extremity.

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- Start taking your pain medication immediately when you start to feel any pain even if it is minimal.
- Monitor your skin closely and place a towel between the skin and any ice pack to avoid frostbite. This is important when the block is working because you will not be able to feel anything.

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.
- 2) After shoulder surgery, it is common for patients to feel more comfortable sitting up 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. Placing a pillow between the arm and bed may help as well.
- 3) If you have received a nerve block (see Nerve Block section), start to 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. See exercise section below.
- 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 keeping in mind any postoperative precautions.

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 or even something from your freezer.

- 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 with a nerve block.
- 3) Apply an ice pack 30 minutes on the shoulder and then 30 minutes off the shoulder to help minimize pain and swelling. You can repeat this cycle as much as possible to help with pain. Because you may not be able to feel how cold the skin is getting, please remember to check the bandages and/or skin often 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.

Wound Care and Dressing Change:

- 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 2 days. During that 2-day period, reinforce the dressing if needed with more gauze and tape directly on top of the initial postop dressings. At the end of 2 days, you may remove the tape and the gauze. In most cases the incision will be closed with stitches that remain under the skin, a special skin glue, and have small strips of tape-like dressings called “Steri-strips”. In this case, no stitches need to be removed. The steri-strips usually begin to fall off on their own after a couple weeks. If not, they can be pulled off at that time. See the figure below:



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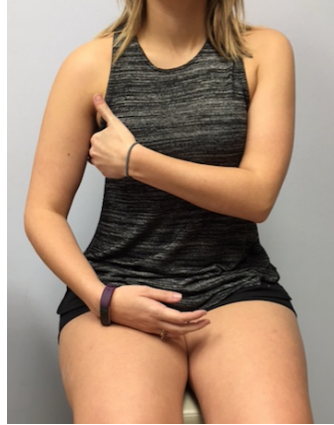
- 2) In other cases, you may see more white gauze, and underneath that you may see yellow gauze. The yellow gauze can be removed, but if the yellow gauze is stuck, you may leave it in place and dress on top of it. Replace clean/fresh white “4x4” gauze or similar dressings over the incisions and re-tape.
- 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 as shown below.



Shower / Bathing:

- 1) Once your incisions have no drainage and are dry for 24 hrs, you may start taking a shower. Allow the operative arm to hang at the side and use the other arm to bathe and dry. It may be easier and helpful to obtain a shower chair or a plastic chair that will allow you to rest the operative arm on your thigh. See images below.
- 2) This can be done in a seated position. Lean toward side as needed to access underneath the arm for bathing.

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3) Replace your sling with the help of the opposite arm. You may have to lean to the side to gently allow your arm to hang away from your body to apply the sling. See instructions above or video on Dr. Witty's website.

Exercises:

- The only exercises you will start before you return to see Dr. Witty will be simple hand and wrist motion.

Elbow Motion:

- You may start to straighten and bend the elbow as your comfort allows in the sling.

Wrist Motion:

- Simply extend, flex, and rotate the wrist back and forth against gravity.



- Perform about 10 – 20 reps 3 times a day.
- Note: Sling in photo may be different than your sling.

Hand Squeezes:

- These can be performed in or out of the sling.

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- You can use any soft ball (tennis, racquetball, etc). Some slings come with their own.
- Squeeze the ball as many times as possible throughout the day.