New West sports medicine & orthopaedic surgery

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After Your Shoulder Tendon Transfer Surgery

Dr. Paul Nielsen

Dressings and Wound Care

- After surgery you will have a bulky dressing on your shoulder for the first day
- The day after surgery, you should remove the bulky dressing but leave the light tan colored Mepilex dressing on the back of the shoulder
    - The Mepilex dressing stays on until follow up
    - Place band-aids over the poke-hole type incision and sutures daily

Pain Medicine

- You will be prescribed several medications to control your pain after surgery
    - See the separate sheet about prescribed medications for further instructions
    - These medications work in different ways to help control your pain without excessive doses of medications like opioids

Activity

- Keep your arm in the external rotation sling/immobilizer full-time
    - No exercises or movements for your shoulder until 6 weeks after surgery
    - Do not attempt to rotate your hand towards your belly
- Move your hand, wrist, and elbow joints immediately after surgery
    - Using the stress ball helps with swelling and weakness in your arm
- To shower, you must keep your arm in external rotation and your elbow away from body
    - Typically you either need help to do this or do sponge baths
- Be careful with activities placing you at risk of falling and injuring your shoulder

Follow-Up Care

- You will have an appointment in clinic 10-14 days after surgery to remove sutures
    - Additional appointments are at 8, 16 and 24 weeks after surgery
- You will be in the external rotation immobilizer for 8 weeks after surgery
- Formal therapy is usually started 8 weeks after surgery

Results

- Some soreness and stiffness often persist until 6-12 months after surgery
- About 75-80% of patients regain adequate function with this surgery