

## **Proximal Humerus Open Reduction and Internal Fixation**

### ***How do you repair a displaced Proximal humerus fracture?***

If surgery is recommended, then the proximal humerus will be repaired using a stainless steel plate and screws. The plate and screws will hold the shoulder in place while it heals. It is strong enough to allow you to have shoulder range of motion without disrupting the fracture site.

### ***Length of Stay***

This is usually done as an outpatient surgery. You will be discharged home the same day. You will need to have someone to drive you home after you have been discharged.

### ***Anesthesia***

Patients usually have two types of anesthesia for this surgery. The first is general anesthesia, which means you are asleep. The second type of anesthesia is a nerve block. Your arm will be numb and will feel very strange. The nerve block will last about 12-14 hours. The anesthesiologist will speak to you on the day of surgery. The ultimate choice of anesthesia technique is up to you and your anesthesiologist.

### ***Incision***

You will have an incision across your shoulder. Once the incision has healed, it is usually very thin and not very noticeable.

### ***Dressings***

You will go home with a waterproof tegaderm dressing. You may shower after surgery as long as the TEGADERM dressing is intact. If the tegaderm begins to fall off it may be removed after 3 days. The actual skin incision CANNOT get wet prior to 3 days. After the dressings are removed, simply allow the water to wash over the site and then pat dry. Do not rub the incisions. Make sure your axilla (armpit) is completely dry after showering.

### ***Pain***

You will have pain medication prescribed for you prior to discharge. After the nerve block wears off you will have discomfort. Most of the pain is related to your very swollen shoulder. That swelling will resolve in 24-48 hours. It is important to stay on top of the pain medication. Most patients receive Toradol, which is a strong anti-inflammatory. Begin taking this medication when you get home. The Narcotic you are prescribed should be used as a rescue medication as needed. For the first 2 days it is advised that you take 1 of these pills around the clock to

stay on top of the pain. If it is too strong, you can take Extra strength Tylenol in its place.

### ***Sling***

Your arm will be placed in a sling prior to leaving the operating room. You are to remain in your sling 24 hours a day. This includes sleeping in your sling. Sling use is for 2 weeks. This aids in healing. For the 2 weeks that you are in your sling, **you are not permitted to drive**. You can remove the sling to take showers and get dressed. Allow the operative arm to dangle at the side and avoid active lifting of the arm.

### ***Post Op Ice Therapy***

If you can obtain an Ice Machine Unit these are very helpful. **Please be sure to bring it in with you on the day of surgery.** Plan to use ice on the shoulder intermittently at least for the first 48 hours after surgery. You should use ice therapy on the shoulder for 15-minute increments throughout the day. Using ice therapy helps decrease pain and swelling. You can use it daily as needed throughout your recovery period.

### ***Physical Therapy***

You should begin Physical Therapy soon after your surgery to regain motion and function of the shoulder. You can start as early as the 1<sup>st</sup> week. Contact your therapist to ensure you have appointments set up after surgery.

### ***Restrictions***

Recovery from a proximal humerus fracture surgery is About three months. During that time you will have some restrictions on the use of your operative arm.

**Day of surgery to Week 2:** no use of arm, out of work

**Weeks 2-6:** opposite hand work only . The arm can be used for activities of daily living , driving, and for range of motion exercises

**Months 2.5-3:** no lifting or carrying greater than 15 lbs, only occasional reaching

**> 3 Months:** No restrictions. No Contact Sports for 6 months.

### ***Driving***

You are not allowed to drive until you are out of the sling and you feel safe. This is usually about 4- 6 weeks post op.

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***Follow Up Appt***

You should have had your follow up appointment made at the time of your preoperative appointment. You should be seen at around 10-14 days.

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