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Frequently Asked Questions for patients with Total Shoulder Reconstructions.

1. ***How long with I wear in the sling?***

- Approximately 6 weeks. At approximately 3 weeks, you may begin to wean your sling in the home. However, you should wear the sling when out of the house and when sleeping. Between 3 and 6 weeks, you should not lift anything heavier than 2#.

2. ***When can I begin driving?***

- Approximately 6 weeks after surgery.

3. ***When do I start Physical Therapy?***

- You will have some in-patient therapy while in the hospital and you will begin outpatient therapy as soon as you go home.

4. ***Can I use my arm for daily activities like brushing my teeth and eating?***

- You can use your arm for activities of such as eating, reading or using a computer at approx 3 weeks after surgery with a lifting restriction of 2# or less. Don't lift your hand above your mouth. Be sure to check with your Therapist to answer specific questions that you may have. You will be seen by an Occupational Therapist while in the hospital that will go over activities of daily living with you.
- At 6 weeks, you may lift your arm and position your hand wherever you like. However, no lifting greater than 5#.

5. ***How long before I start strengthening my shoulder.***

- You will not start strengthening the shoulder until about 4 ½ months after surgery; however, you will be working on a progression of range of motion starting the day after surgery. You will return to sports/leisure activities beginning at approximately 6 months post surgery and progressing in the level of performance over the next 6 months. Remember, tendons heal very slowly and undue stress too early can cause tendon failure leading to further injury.

6. ***What do I do about my incision?***

- Most incisions are closed with absorbable suture. If this is the case for you, you may get your incision wet. Please don't scrub it hard. If there is a band-aid, then you may remove it after 2 days.

Key points to remember:

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- We want to protect the repair of your shoulder; so don't do too much too early.
- Don't use your surgical arm to push up out of bed or a chair.
- Use ice for swelling and pain.
- WEAR YOUR SLING (for the first 3-6 weeks); it will protect your repair.
- Be cautious of increased redness and heat at the incision; these may be signs of infection.
Call your MD if you suspect a problem.

Please contact Dr. Kelly's Medical Assistant with any questions.

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