



Texas Orthopedics,
Sports & Rehabilitation Associates
www.txortho.com

Shoulder Surgery/Arthroscopy: Dressings

After your shoulder surgery you will have a big, cumbersome dressing on your shoulder. Because of the shape of the shoulder, it's hard to get the dressing to fit just right. You'll have to put up with that for a few days. Try to keep your dressing from getting wet.

Can I change my dressings?

I prefer that you leave your dressings from surgery on for 3-4 days. After that you can change them. Remove the tape and bulky gauze dressings. Throw them away. If you have a large incision, you can cover it with clean 4x4 gauze or one of those large Band-Aids. There are a large variety of them at any drug store.

If you have little arthroscopy incisions, you can replace the dressings with smaller Band-Aids. **DO NOT KEEP WATERPROOF BAND-AIDS ON YOUR INCISIONS.** They will deprive them of air and can lead to infections. It's fine to use them temporarily to take a shower. Just don't leave them on. After you shower, take them off and replace with regular, old fashioned tape Band-Aids.

If you don't feel like changing your dressings, there's nothing wrong with leaving them on until you come to the office to get your stitches out.

If you change your dressings, especially if it's within the first few days after surgery, always make sure your hands are clean. You can also put on rubber gloves. If you wipe down disposable rubber gloves with alcohol, they will be very clean and safe to use. Try not to intentionally touch your incisions until after your stitches are removed.

Should I clean my incisions?

It is not necessary to clean incisions after surgery. But if they get dirty or you just feel like you have to clean them, then use hydrogen peroxide or alcohol (it burns a little but you can just wave the air over it with your hand, like your mom used to do).

Do I need to look at my incisions?

The only reason you must remove your dressings to look at the incisions is if you think there is something wrong; increased swelling, drainage or warmth coming from the area. If you think there is a problem and you are wondering whether or not to look at your incisions, do not hesitate to call the office or if after hours, the physician on-call for the group, by dialing our main number, 512-439-1000.

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