



## **What to Expect After A Shoulder Fracture**

**This fracture can be painful for months and can be very frustrating due to length of time it takes for the diminishing pain to fully resolve. Patience, use of ice and physical therapy are very helpful.**

### **Swelling:**

It is normal to have swelling in the hand and arm as well as bruising after this injury. It is important to make a full fist with the hand, making every joint fully flex and extend many times per day. This will help with the hand swelling. Bruising will resolve after a week or two. Ice helps with swelling and can be applied to the area over the dressings for 20 minutes per hour.

**Sling Use:** For the first week, the sling should be used 95% of the time. You will wean sling use during the second and third weeks.

**Driving:** If you are still in the sling, and if you are taking opioid pain medications, you may not drive.

### **Week 1-6**

**Sling:** may be used to wear for comfort as needed.

Maintain elbow and wrist range of motion exercises, but no muscle resistance exercises.

May begin to wean from sling. May begin active range of motion in physical therapy week 2-3.

No lifting anything heavier than a coffee cup.

### **Weeks 6- 12**

May begin resistance and strengthening exercises in physical therapy.

### **Weeks 12+**

Most motion returns after 6 months with a lot of hard work. In some cases full motion may normalize after a year. Final mobility depends on diligence and being consistent with your stretching program..