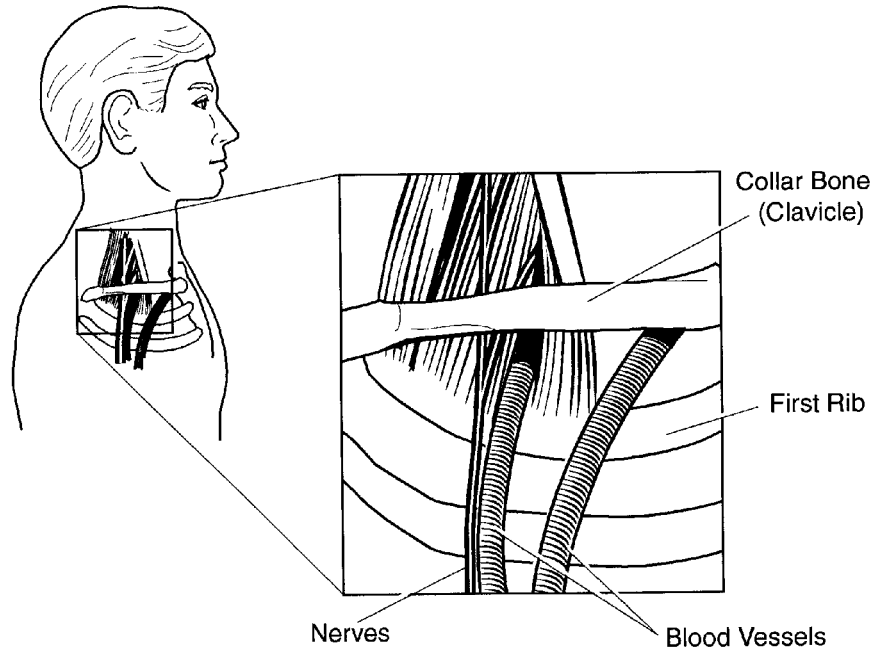


## Home Care after First Rib Resection

First rib resection is a surgery to ease the symptoms of thoracic outlet syndrome. The first rib near the neck is removed to make more room for the blood vessels and nerves. This takes pressure off the blood vessels and nerves. The pain and numb feeling should lessen when the pressure is gone.



Follow these guidelines as you go home after surgery to help you get better. If your doctor has given you other directions, follow what your doctor told you. Please ask your doctor or nurse if you have any questions or if you want more information.

### Activity

- You may be up as much as you like. You can use your arm on the surgery side for light activities.
- To protect your arm and help healing, do not lift anything heavier than 8-10 pounds until you have your follow up visit with your doctor. Also avoid pulling, stressful movements and sports with the arm until you see your doctor.
- Do not drive until you can move your arm and shoulder with ease. You need to be able to use your arm with comfort to safely drive a car.
- You will be given some exercises to do at home. Start these on the second day after your surgery. The exercises will help keep your shoulder joint loose so you don't get stiff.

## Your Incision

- Most often the incision will be under your arm in your armpit, but some people may have the incision near the collar bone. The stitches holding your incision together are under the skin and will not need to be removed. You may have strips of tape called steri-strips over the incision. Do not remove these. The tapes will loosen over the next 7-10 days and fall off. If the tapes don't fall off after 10 days, you can remove them like you would take off a band-aid.
- You can leave the incision open to the air. If you have any drainage, cover the incision with a large band-aid or use gauze pads and tape. This will absorb the drainage. Change the dressing each day or if it becomes wet or loose. If you sweat from your armpit, you should also cover your armpit incision.
- You may shower but do not scrub or soak your incision. Let the water run over the incision and then gently pat the incision dry. Do not rub the incision.
- Women may wear a bra if it is comfortable against the incision.

## When to Call Your Doctor

It is not unusual to have a numbness along the inside of the upper arm. This can happen when a nerve needed to be stretched or cut during surgery. You may also notice that your arm or breast may be more sensitive to touch or temperature, or there is a burning feeling. These are common symptoms. Talk to your doctor about these changes if you have concerns.

Call your doctor right away if you have:

- redness, swelling, bruising or drainage from your incision
- increased pain at the incision
- temperature above 100.5 degrees F
- trouble breathing or chest pain
- return of symptoms that you had before surgery
- coldness, numbness, discoloration or inability to move your arm

Ask your doctor or nurse if you have any questions, or if you are not sure what you should do to care for yourself at home.

**If you would like more written information, please call the Center for Health Information at (614)293-3707. You can also make the request by e-mail: [health-info@osu.edu](mailto:health-info@osu.edu).**

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- ▶ Upon request all patient education handouts are available in other formats for people with special hearing, vision and language needs by calling (614) 293-3191.