

Orthopedic Closure Protocol

Standardized closure and recovery framework for orthopedic surgery

Purpose

Orthopedic surgery ends at skin closure. Closure is the final point under direct surgical control and the moment recovery begins. This protocol complements — not replaces — surgical technique, antibiotic strategy, or aseptic practice. This protocol standardizes how that transition is managed.

Protocol Structure

Phase 1 — Intraoperative Closure (Operating Room)

Phase 2 — Postoperative Recovery (Client-Facing)

Because orthopedics involves implants, prolonged exposure, and high functional demand during recovery, consistency at closure is particularly important.

Phase 1 — Intraoperative Closure

Objective

Address residual bacterial burden at the time of closure using a standardized final lavage step.

Clinical Rationale

Closure strategies are evaluated at the point of closure — the final point under surgical control — using activity-based methods applied across orthopedic and implant-associated procedures.

Standard saline irrigation remains foundational but may not address all residual bacterial burden immediately prior to closure.

Protocol Step

- Apply the final intraoperative lavage as the final adjunct prior to closure
- Allow appropriate dwell time
- Perform copious saline irrigation immediately prior to layered closure
- Proceed with routine layered closure

This step integrates into existing orthopedic workflows without altering technique, instrumentation, or operative timing.

Phase 2 — Postoperative Recovery

Objective

Standardize owner communication and recovery execution following orthopedic surgery.

Clinical Rationale

Because closure marks the transition from surgical control to owner-mediated healing, recovery execution is treated as a continuation of the closure protocol.

Protocol Step

- Provide structured orthopedic recovery guidance to the client
 - Reinforce restrictions, milestones, and follow-up expectations
 - Maintain continuity from surgery through home recovery
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Standard execution for orthopedic surgery

When This Applies

- Orthopedic procedures
- Begins immediately prior to skin closure
- Continues through recovery handoff

Operating Room (Closure)

- 1. Complete orthopedic procedure**
All fixation and implant placement finalized per surgeon direction.
- 2. Apply final intraoperative closure lavage**
Apply the adjunctive lavage as directed by the surgeon.
- 3. Allow appropriate dwell time**
Maintain the operative field per protocol before proceeding.
- 4. Perform saline irrigation and proceed with closure**
Perform saline irrigation immediately prior to routine layered closure.

Transition Point

Skin closure marks transfer from surgical control to recovery execution.

- 5. Begin orthopedic recovery guidance process**
Ensure client receives procedure-specific recovery instructions.
- 6. Reinforce key restrictions and milestones**
Review activity limits, monitoring, and follow-up timing.
- 7. Confirm recovery guidance has been initiated prior to discharge**

Rules

- Do not skip steps
- Maintain sequence unless surgeon directs otherwise
- Consistency is required across cases