

# Post Op Instructions: Total Shoulder Replacement

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## DRESSING/BANDAGES

- You may shower 48 hours after surgery, but do not take a bath or submerge your shoulder in water until your incisions are checked at your first post-op visit. Keep dressing dry. Your stitches are buried under the skin and will dissolve away over time.
- You may have bruising around your shoulder that can track down your arm. If you notice that there is bruising on your shoulder, arm, elbow, wrist, or hand (and you don't have pain in these places), then don't worry, this is normal.

## MOVEMENT

- For the first 10-14 days after your surgery, you must always wear your sling including while you are asleep. You may only remove the sling to shower and to perform range of motion exercises (Codman's pendulums). You should flex and extend your elbow 3 to 4 times a day to prevent stiffness.
- Do not externally rotate your arm past neutral. You can extend/raise your arm forward only, as if you were bringing your arm to a salute position.

## MEDICATIONS

- A nerve block was performed where an injection of local anesthesia was injected into your shoulder after the completion of the operation. During this time, you will have little to no feeling in the body part where you had surgery (i.e. arm). This nerve block will wear off in 18-24 hours - you will know this is happening as your hand and arm will tingle. To control your pain during this transition while the nerve block is wearing off, you must eat first and then begin taking the pain medication.
- You can begin the prescription pain medication provided to you upon arriving home and continue every 4-6 hours as needed for pain.
- Most patients will require some narcotic pain medication for a short period of time - this can be taken as per the directions on the bottle.
- Common side effects of the pain medication are nausea, drowsiness, and constipation - to decrease the side effects, take medication with food - if constipation occurs, consider taking an over-the-counter laxative such as Dulcolax or Colace.
- If you are having problems with nausea and vomiting, contact the office to possibly have your medication changed (1-800-974-5633)
- Do not drive a car or operate machinery while taking narcotic medication.
- Ibuprofen 200-600mg (i.e. Advil) may be taken in between the narcotic pain medication to help smooth out the post-operative 'peaks and valleys', reduce the overall amount of pain medication required, and increase the time intervals between narcotic pain medication usage.

## ICE THERAPY

- Beginning immediately following surgery, use the ice machine (when prescribed as directed for the first 2-3 days following surgery. Ice at your discretion thereafter.
- When using "real" ice, avoid direct skin contact > 20 mins to prevent damage/frostbite of the skin. Check the skin frequently for excessive redness, blistering, or other signs of frostbite. When using the ice machine, it is okay to ice continuously as long as you check the skin frequently.

## ACTIVITY

- Wear sling at all times other than personal hygiene, wardrobe changes, and exercises (last page).
- The sling will be worn during the day and at night until you are 2 weeks post-op. At 2 weeks post-op, you may remove the sling at night. At 6 weeks, the sling may be discontinued, unless otherwise specified.
- It is ok to sleep however you are comfortable.
- Do not engage in activities which increase shoulder pain over the first 7-10 days following surgery.
- NO driving. You will be cleared to drive after the first postoperative visit if narcotic pain medication has been discontinued.

- Air travel is permitted 14 days after surgery. Air travel and immobility increase the risk of blood clots. Unless you have been previously instructed to avoid aspirin products for medical reasons or you are under age 16, ensure that you are taking 81 mg baby aspirin twice daily beginning the day after surgery to minimize the risk of blood clot.

#### **DRIVING**

- You may drive approximately 2-3 weeks after surgery if you are not taking pain medication. It is recommended that you are out of the sling and that you have good control of your arm prior to driving.

#### **DIET**

- Begin with clear liquids and light foods (Jello, soup, etc.).
- Progress to your normal diet as tolerated.

#### **APPOINTMENT**

- Your postoperative appointment will be made prior to surgery. You will receive a reminder from the office prior to the visit. This will be 10-14 days after surgery at your surgeon's office.

#### **\*\*EMERGENCIES\*\***

Contact the practice hotline at 1-800-974-5633 if any of the following are present:

- Unrelenting pain, despite taking medications as prescribed.
- Fever (over 101°). It is normal to have a low-grade fever following surgery.
- Continuous drainage or bleeding from incisions (a small amount of drainage is expected)
- Difficulty breathing
- Excessive nausea/vomiting uncontrolled

**DO NOT CALL THE HOSPITAL OR SURGICENTER FOR EMERGENCIES IF YOU HAVE A NEED THAT REQUIRES IMMEDIATE ATTENTION, PROCEED TO THE NEAREST EMERGENCY ROOM**

## SHOULDER POST OPERATIVE EXERCISES

### WRIST FLEXION / EXTENSION



Actively bend wrist forward.  
Then backwards as far as you can.  
Repeat 10-15 times. Do 3 sessions per day.

### PENDULUM SWINGS

(Clockwise/counterclockwise)



Let arm move in a clockwise circle,  
then counterclockwise by rocking body  
weight in a circular pattern.  
Repeat 10-15 times. Do 3 sessions per day

### PENDULUM SWINGS

(Side to side)



Gently move arm from side to side  
by rocking body weight from side to side.  
Let arm swing freely.  
Repeat 10-15 times. Do 3 sessions per day