

PREPARING FOR AND RECOVERING FROM SHOULDER REPLACEMENT

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This information is intended to help you know what to expect when you undergo shoulder replacement. Each patient's situation is unique and may differ from the general guidelines.

BEFORE SURGERY

- My office will arrange for blood work and preoperative appointment with your PCP or cardiologist prior to surgery.
- You may also meet with the anesthesia team at the hospital the week prior to your procedure.
- Unless otherwise instructed, stop all blood thinning medication for 5 days prior to surgery and stop testosterone, even if physician directed, **one month** before surgery.
- Follow your medical doctor's recommendation on whether to take medications on the morning of surgery with a small sip of water. If you are on a beta blocker, you should continue to take it unless otherwise instructed.
- Focus on good nutrition. I may have prescribed weight loss before considering you a candidate for shoulder replacement, but starting two weeks prior to surgery, do not lose any weight and try to maintain your weight after surgery. Patients with diabetes should focus on tight blood glucose control and notify their internist or endocrinologist if they are having difficulty managing their glucose levels.
- You will receive specific instruction on how to cleanse the shoulder with surgical soap on the night before and again the morning of surgery. Some patients will be prescribed benzoyl peroxide wash of the shoulder with over the counter acne soap for one week prior to surgery.
- **No eating or drinking after midnight the night before surgery.**

WHAT TO BRING

- SLING
- Oversized button down shirt
- Pants with an elastic waist
- Comfortable, supportive shoes that don't need laces tied
- Basic toiletries (toothbrush, brush, face cream)
- Healthy snacks that don't require refrigeration
- Cell phone and a charger
- Reading glasses and hearing aids
- Do not bring any jewelry or valuable items other than your cell phone and your wallet

THE DAY OF SURGERY

- When you arrive at the hospital, the preoperative team will start an IV and antibiotics.
- You will likely receive an arm block (regional anesthesia) that will numb and paralyze your shoulder temporarily. The effects could last anywhere from 12-48 hours after surgery. Sometimes the blocks are not 100% effective.

- Depending on the severity of arthritis, patient size and overall health, and history of prior surgeries to your shoulder, most patients' surgery will take between 1-2 hours. For the first 30 minutes before and after surgery you are being placed under anesthesia and positioned for surgery, and being woken up.
- To your family and friends it could be 3 hours from the time they say goodbye to you and when they hear from me. Not all of that time is surgery.
- You will probably spend 1-2 hours in the recovery area (PACU) before they take you up to your room or discharge you.
- If you are not too sleepy from the anesthesia, you should try to **walk with someone's assistance or supervision** the afternoon of surgery. This will keep your lungs well aerated and the blood circulating in your veins to prevent clotting. It will also help you feel more oriented.

AFTER SURGERY

When can I go home after surgery?

Most patients will be released from the surgery facility on the same day as surgery. Some patients may require an overnight stay.

Will I receive medication for pain?

Yes. Discontinue the prescription medication as soon as your pain levels allow you to do so, with a goal of being off prescription pain medication by three days after surgery.

How do I sleep after surgery?

Getting comfortable to sleep can be challenging after shoulder surgery. Some patients recovering from shoulder surgery find it helpful to sleep in a recliner chair or propped up in bed with pillows, but this is not mandatory. If you receive instructions that the sling should be worn at all times, this includes while sleeping.

Will I receive a cooling machine?

If you are interested in renting an ice machine that circulates ice water around your shoulder, please let my office know. Whether you use an ice machine or a reusable pack/gel pad, ice is an excellent means of reducing pain and swelling in the shoulder.

How do I take care of the incision?

The cleanest bandage your shoulder will have is the one placed in the operating room immediately after the surgery, because it is placed in a sterile environment. Furthermore, this bandage has a water resistant cover that makes it easier to keep the incision dry while showering so long as the operative shoulder is pointed away from the showerhead or a hand held wand is used. Some bruising of the arm and chest and swelling of the surgical area is expected.

How long do I have to be in a sling?

- Remain in the sling at all times except for showering or stretching the elbow.
- No shoulder motion until you come to the office for an appointment.
- As soon as you regain control of your arm, you should bend and straighten your fingers into a fist to keep them from getting stiff.

- You can also bend your elbow to bring your hand to your face or on a table surface for eating, brushing your teeth, texting on your phone, etc.
- Your hand on the surgery side should remain in front of your face until instructed.
- When you are bathing you can bend forward at the hips and lower back and dangle your arm out of the sling to straighten out the elbow to prevent stiffness and so that you can access under your arm for bathing.
- For anatomic total shoulder replacement, the sling is usually worn for 6 weeks.
- For reverse total shoulder replacement, the period of sling immobilization is usually 4-6 weeks.

How much general activity is advised?

Try to maintain light levels of activity in a climate-controlled environment. Walking around your home or in a cool environment with even footing will help prevent blood clots and constipation. Avoid sweating as this can lead to wound infection.

How soon after surgery may I drive?

Many patients want to know when they can resume driving after shoulder replacement surgery. This is contingent upon a variety of factors including duration of sling immobilization, manual or automatic transmission, etc. Generally, reaction time can be affected for up to 6 weeks following shoulder surgery, with variability from patient to patient. You should ask Dr. Diaz before resuming driving after shoulder surgery. You should begin with short, familiar distances and have a licensed driver in the passenger seat the first time you resume driving.

When may I return to work or resume sports?

Return to work or sports is dependent on a number of variables. Patients with sedentary jobs may be able to return as early as two weeks. Patients who have to use their arm for lifting, carrying, climbing, driving, or above eye level work will generally need 12 weeks of modified or no work. I generally allow patients to return to golf, tennis, and swimming between 4-5 months, but in select cases earlier.

May I have dental cleanings or procedures before or after my surgery?

Prior to your surgery, you should not have dental work in the month leading up to your surgery date. You must wait 6 weeks from your surgery date to schedule or have any dental cleanings performed by your hygienist. You must wait 12 weeks from your surgery to have any dental work such as root canals, crowns, etc. Dental cleanings performed and will require a treatment of antibiotics prior to the procedure. Please be sure your dental office is aware of your surgery date and the above protocols.