



## Quick Reference Post-Operative Instructions for Total Shoulder Replacement

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You will have a short stay in the hospital. For most people this will be one overnight stay. If you have complex medical issues you may stay longer.

### SLING

- You should be fitted for a sling prior to surgery. Call us if you do not have this appointment set up. Bring it with you on the day of surgery.
- You should plan to wear the sling at all times, only removing it for showering and exercises. When you take it off to shower let your arm hang down, do not use it to lift or wash. Exercises will consist of pendulums, or exercises prescribed by your physical therapist
- You will be in your ultra-sling for 6 weeks.
- You cannot drive while you are in a sling.
- When you are 6 weeks out from your surgery date you can start to wean out of sling as tolerated based on your physical therapist's recommendation.

### PAIN

- The day of surgery you will be receiving a scalene nerve block, this block can last 12-18 hours after surgery (your arm may feel numb for this time)
- Although you may not have much pain while the block is still working we recommend taking your prescribed pain medication before the block wears off. Plan to take the pain medication regularly the first 3-5 days to stay ahead of the pain.
- You will have received medicine that will make you sleepy. This will affect your ability to think clearly and make good decisions. You will need a responsible adult to drive you home and stay with you for at least 24 hours after your hospital stay. Do not drive, use machinery, or make important decisions while on pain medications. Do not drink alcohol while on pain medications.
- If you are having trouble sleeping try taking over the counter Benadryl before bed.
- Consider taking an over the counter stool softener while on narcotic medication. As well as eat plenty of fiber and drink plenty of water.

## WOUND CARE

- Do not shower or bathe for the first 48 hours after surgery
  - Please leave your dressing/bandages on for the first 48 hours
  - You will have small tape strips (Steri-Strips) over your incision, leave them in place until they fall off- usually after about 10-14 days. We will take them off in the office at your first visit after surgery.
- After 48 hours it is ok to shower
  - Only let the water run over the shoulder (do not scrub or wash directly over your incision sites)
  - Pat dry over the Steri-Strips
  - Do not submerge the shoulder in any type of water (bath, hot tub, pool, etc.) for at least 4-6 weeks
- If your incision is draining after you shower, cover with fresh dressings daily until no longer draining. This should not last more than a couple of days. If the wound site is dry you can leave it open to air.
- Do not apply any lotions or ointments to the wound site until permission from the doctor. This will be at least until your first post-operative visit.
- At your 2-week post-op visit you will have x-rays taken and your incision will be checked
  - If you need to schedule a 2-week post-op visit please **call Darcy at 651-351-2671**

## PHYSICAL THERAPY

- Home exercises after surgery:
  - Pendulums
  - Any exercises prescribed by inpatient physical therapy (while you are in the hospital)
- We will give you a prescription to start outpatient physical therapy when you come in for your 2-week visit
- Feel free to call the physical therapy office to make appointments right after your 2-week after surgery visit. Physical Therapy scheduling for Stillwater and Woodbury 651-351-2602.
- The first 6 weeks after surgery therapy will be focused mostly on motion. We are trying to not let your shoulder get stiff. Strength will come later with use.

## WHEN SHOULD YOU BE CONCERNED?

- Temperature above 101.6. It is normal to have a mild temperature a day or two after surgery. Make sure you are taking deep breaths to fill your lungs all the way.
  - Signs of infection- increasing pain, increasing swelling, redness, unpleasant odor, increased warmth, or green or yellow drainage.
  - If you have severe symptoms, such as:
    - Chest pain
    - Difficulty breathing
    - Weakness or inability to move the arms and legs as usual
    - Severe headache
    - New confusion
    - Loss of bowel or bladder function
- CALL 911 or go to an emergency department at a nearby hospital**
- If you feel it is not urgent contact our **office at 651-351-2671**. You will likely have to leave a message and your call will be returned. We try to return all calls quickly, but it may be a few hours or the next day.